NEW STATESMAN
SOCIETY

29 July 1988
US $1.75 Air
IR £1.47
UK £1

# Politics is boring

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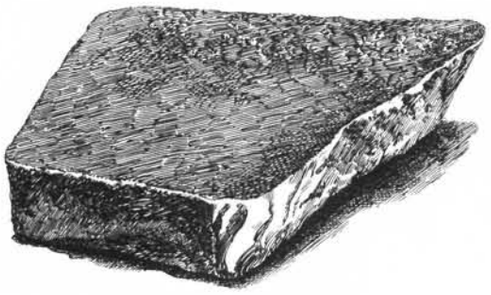

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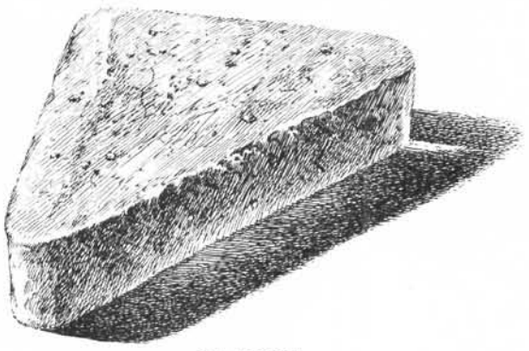

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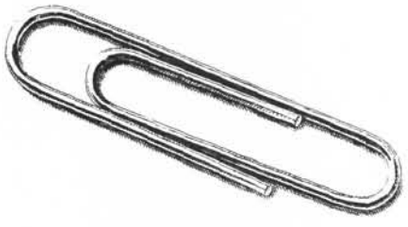

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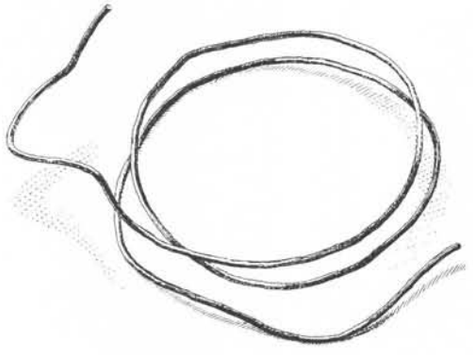

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NEW STATESMAN & SOCIETY

22 July 1988
Vol 1 No 7
New Statesman
Vol 116 No 2990
New Society
Vol 84 No 1333
ISSN 0954-2361

© 1988 Statesman & Nation Publishing Company Limited
Foundation House
Perseverance Works
38 Kingsland Road
London E2 8DQ
Telex 28449
Fax 01-739 9307
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Accounts/Subscriptions 01-739 1737

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**Subscription rates**
UK & Eire £48
Europe air mail only £55
USA air mail $106 air speed $87
Elsewhere air mail £73 air speed £61
US postmaster: address changes to New Statesman & Society, Speedimpex USA inc., 45-45 39th Street, Long Island City, NY 11104

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# DIARY

*Sean French*

**The biggest laugh I've had recently was provoked by Maggie Brooks's interview with the editor of the** *Sunday Times*, Andrew Neil, in the *Independent* last week. Neil made a startling admission: "One of my failures has been not discovering a left-of-centre columnist with clout." I found this irresistibly funny—as if the editor of *Tribune* were to bemoan his lack of a first class Court correspondent.

It must be obvious to any reader that the *Sunday Times* needs a weighty left-wing voice about as much as Murdoch needs a referral to the Monopolies Commission. The very attraction of the journals of the new libertarian right, such as the *Sunday Times* and the *Economist*, is that they give their readers an ordered, utterly coherent view of the world for those who have done well out of Thatcherism.

I don't mean this as a criticism. I disagree with much of the abuse that is levelled at Andrew Neil and at his paper. Both the *Sunday Times* and the *Economist* are unfairly accused of being slavish followers of Mrs Thatcher. In reality, they are consistent where she is not. They agree with her on economic liberty but they extend the principle into the political and personal realm as well (both have opposed the poll tax and argued for the virtual decriminalisation of drugs, for example).

However, their disagreement with the government is always within the terms of Thatcherism. When they criticise the Prime Minister it is because she is not being true to herself. In this context debate can only operate within limits. There is perhaps room for a couple of tame socialists to say an occasional word on behalf of the nurses or to attack the unions from a left-wing perspective, but not for assaults on the whole basis of Thatcherism.

**The real worry is not the lack of dissent in the right-wing press, but the lack in the supposedly left-wing press.**

This thought occurred to me as I was reading last week's article by the man I consider currently to be the best columnist in the political press—William Keegan, who writes the "In My View" column, tucked away in the *Observer* Business section.

I've never met Keegan but I once saw him in the flesh and he looked like a serving major in one of the more desirable and conservative regiments. I was amazed to find that this Rider Haggard figure was the author of that stern critique, *Mrs Thatcher's Economic Experiment* (published as a Penguin paperback). And in the last couple of weeks he has written attacks on the very basis of Thatcherite economics of a ferocity and cogency that I had despaired of ever seeing again.

In the last couple of years liberal commentators—and even Labour politicians—have been bending over backwards to be positive about the Thatcher revolution. Too often they have taken the government's self-proclaimed achievements as a given and then quibbled about the distribution of the fruits of this success.

The problem with bending over backwards is that if you go too far you can end up stuck facing the wrong way. It was a just reward for this strategy that Bryan Gould spoke in praise of share ownership in the week before the stock market crash.

Keegan's account of the failure of the Thatcher revolution was advanced with a conviction and clarity that put the Labour front bench to shame. Not only did he accuse the governmnet of practising "a particularly vicious kind of economic sadism"; he argued with immense clarity that the experience "has essentially failed".

I'm writing this not in my capacity as a commentator myself but as an interested amateur. The success of Mrs Thatcher and the press that supports her has been in articulating what a section of the population vaguely felt. The writing of Keegan (and others, like Michael Ignatieff) does the same for another group of people by defining precisely what they dimly sense is wrong with the economy. It's through processes of this kind that political change occurs, and if the opposition is incapable of formulating such ideas then other groups are going to have to do it for them.

**For the next three weeks I am confined to barracks.** I am editing the book pages while Tony Gould is on holiday. It's bad enough not getting to the bank and having to shop in the evening. Worst of all, instead of having to deal with one problematic writer, myself, I have to deal with a whole bunch of them. Neal Ascherson once wrote that the job of a literary editor is to ruin the next generation of writers. That is, the literary editor has to struggle to lure people away from writing the books they should be writing in order to get them to write book reviews.

The particular skill required is somewhere between that of the patent medicine salesman and the American TV evangelist, cajoling, begging and enthusing.

For someone like me who reviews a lot there is an additional problem. When contemplating ringing up a critic, I must always try to remember whether I am on speaking terms with them or not. Did I review X's last novel? I remember nothing either of Y's play or of my review of it. Was I positive or negative?

Worst of all I discovered when it was too late that the crafty Gould had escaped at the time of year when virtually no books are published and almost all the reviewers are away on holiday.

**I went to a party over the weekend where I met a very nice man who works at the BBC.** We talked for a while and he said that he read my column and thought that I should work on television. What a nice man, I thought; and not only that, what a perceptive man.

I was already starting to think of contracts and proposals when the man fell silent, reflected for a moment, narrowed his eyes and scrutinised me closely for the first time. Of course, he said, your hair is thinning at the front and that might be a bit of a problem. Also your nose is rather big and your eyes a bit deep set. He brooded once more and then moved on to another subject, as if nothing had happend.

I felt rather like a cat that had lain back in order to be stroked and then had suddenly had its nose tweaked. It was clear that the impromptu audition was over, as was my TV career. The life of a celebrity can be tough but the life of an obscurity has its ups and downs as well.

ROGER WODDIS

## The Solitude of Augusto Pinochet

**(Acknowledgments to William Cowper)**

*General Pinochet, dictator of Chile, is planning to flee to Robinson Crusoe island in the Pacific if he loses power in the plebiscite to be held later this year*

I am master of Chile today,
My power there is none to dispute;
But I'm thinking of getting away,
As soon as I've packed all the loot.
O solitude! what use are arms
When there are wild peasants to face?
Better live on a rock without farms
Than die in a dangerous place.

When the Chilean rich had the runs
(This was way back in '73),
They needed a butcher with guns,
And I told them — who better than me?
Now Washington says they are proud
Of the way that I've tried to reform,
Though of course the odd death's still allowed
And screams in the night are the norm.

Democracy's proper and good —
It's what every candidate plugs —
But if people don't vote as they should,
You may have to send in the thugs.
Now Chile is not the UK,
And you Britons have nothing to fear;
As Chilean folk used to say,
Don't worry, it can't happen here.


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EDITORIAL

# Who dares wins

*A new left think tank has been set up. It should adopt the SAS's motto*

The foundation this week of a left-wing think tank, the Institute for Policy Research, is very good news. For far too long the mushrooming policy units of the radical right—at the last count nearly a dozen of them—have monopolised this corner of the political market.

Even now, Conservative publicists weep crocodile tears over the supposed lack of serious intellectual opponents for them to get their teeth into. Their apparent concern is garbage: what they mean is that they don't find enough left-wing arguments expressed in a form they can understand. In any case, when they do recognise a left-wing head raised above the parapet, their instinct is still to hack it off: witness the disgraceful personal attacks on Margaret Drabble and Antonia Fraser.

New socialist thinking has tended to come in rather weighty, often academic, books and papers; which neither busy politicians nor lazy journalists will read. The institutes of the right instead produce slim pamphlets, accompanied by press releases which make their brief messages even briefer and easier to assimilate. Such publications also have the considerable advantage of arriving on the opinion-former's desk courtesy of an efficient (if deplorably unprivatised) Post Office: no need to waste time trailing round bookshops, let alone reading books. The new institute will have to adopt similar tactics if it is to convince the press that there is intelligent life out here on the left side of the body politic.

Much of the work which made the Tory think-tanks influential has really been just propaganda; they've not undertaken genuinely new thinking or real research. Sometimes they are merely irresponsible. The sight on television last week of a baby-faced chap from the Adam Smith Institute, burbling at ease about how jolly interesting an experiment with private enterprise prisons would be, was not edifying; especially when intercut with scenes of indescribable squalor in the cells.

A policy unit of the left can and must avoid such nonsense. There is real research, and real thinking, to be done. But it must be unafraid of irreverence. It must be prepared to grab the headlines as well as engage the intellect, and to challenge the old shibboleths of Labour tradition as well as the new ones of market Conservatism. It will fail if it doesn't shock the left (and, please, this magazine). But it will fail equally if it doesn't sponsor ideas which the press will dub "extremist". Nothing could be more crippling to intellectual initiative than to go in fear of the "loony left" label. If we can't take thoughts which the right derides as bonkers and bring them into the mainstream of political debate, hoping eventually to make them part of the common sense of our society, the IPR's project is doomed anyway.

After all, some 30 years ago the Institute of Economic Affairs began to propagate loony right-wing ideas which ran quite contrary to the consensus of the times. That they're now received wisdom was amply demonstrated by the tenor of the questions which the press corps put to the IPR's founders at their launch this week. For them, new thinking on the left means further accommodation with market ideas and hopes of breathing new intellectual life into collectivist ideals are typically regarded as "defensive". No one should under-estimate the inhibitory weight of these received wisdoms, least of all the IPR's tank of thinkers.

We hope that we, as a magazine of ideas, and the new institute can assist one another. Much of the IPR's task should be one of coordination; acting as a clearing-house and junction-box for scattered intellectual initiatives.

The initiative is yet another sign that the intellectual community may at last be mobilising against the right-wing hegemony in ideas. This reaction is in part defensive, but what it wants to defend, often in its own interests (higher education, science research), is well worth defending. Nevertheless, Thatcherism is terribly vulnerable to a self-confident and aggressive left revival. Often the new right institutes have seemed to trade less on intellectual substance than on the radical chic of free market ideas. Even after nearly a decade of Thatcherism, ever-battier proposals to privatise yet another institution still produce a frisson of excitement in the media. The recent spoof commercials for a share flotation in "British Army plc", run by a brewery, struck an apt note.

This late-seventies intellectual fashion really should by now have gone the way of other trends of its time, like bondage trousers and safety pins through the nose. If the IPR does nothing more than help initiate a new season in designer policies, it will justify its existence. We hope, of course, that it can do much more than that.


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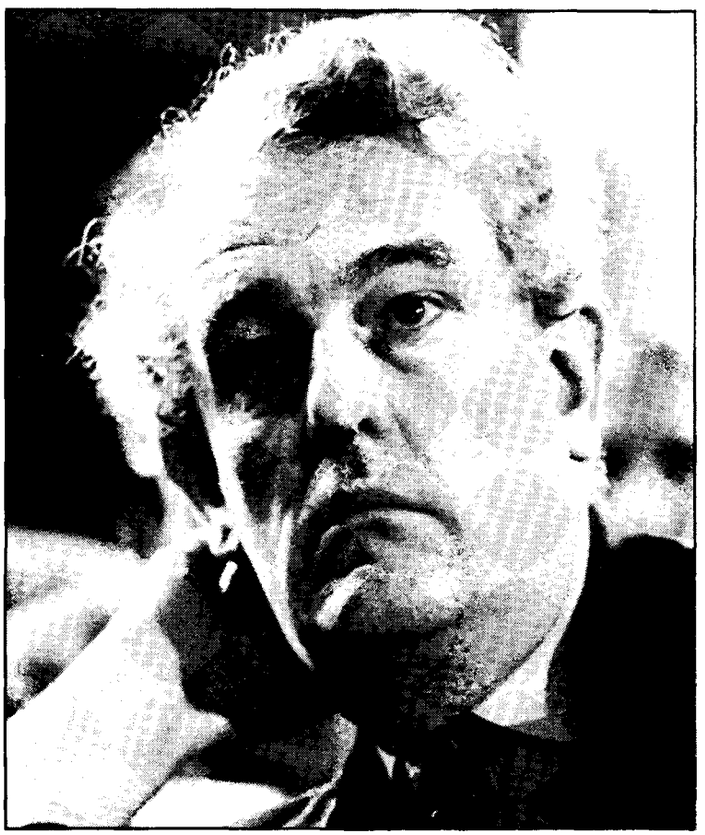

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# Dalyell's obsession still justified

*Tam Dalyell, MP, has again been suspended from the Commons for calling the PM a liar over Westland. He explains why he won't let go.*

Some years ago the *New Statesman* carried a leader entitled "A Justified Obsession". It outlined support for my nagging on and on about the sinking of the Belgrano. That was when I was suspended for the first time in 20 years of good behaviour in the House of Commons. Shortly afterwards came the trial of Clive Ponting and justification for everything that the *New Statesman* leader writer and I had separately said.

As a very active Euro MP from 1975 to 1979, I have some knowledge of the European Commission and the qualities required in an effective commissioner. Christopher Soames was effective; so, too, was the then George Thompson, now Lord Thompson of Monifieth, albeit with a different style. But for the kind of reasons that he proved to be an unacceptable Home Secretary, and virtually friendless as Trade and Industry Secretary in his hour of need during the Westland crisis, I shall be pleasantly surprised if Leon Brittan proves to be a successful commissioner.

However, the suitability of Leon Brittan for the post is not the only issue. The brutal fact is that our country is sending to the Commission, as a vice president no less, a man who at the present time, rightly or wrongly, is a soiled, discredited politician. Leon Brittan should not go to Brussels unless he is fully exonerated of deceit in the now famous leaking to the press of the Solicitor General's letter to Michael Heseltine. The Prime Minister cannot have it both ways. Either Leon Brittan is not a proper person to be vice chairman of the European Commission, or someone else is to blame for the deceits of Westland, in which case that "someone else" had better be indentified and that "someone else" is Mrs Thatcher.

On 27 January 1986, after the leak inquiry, Dennis Skinner blurted out *the* pertinent question: "Why have an inquiry?" In reply, Mrs Thatcher claimed that she did not know about Leon Brittan's role until after the inquiry had reported. This is just not true. Mr Charles Powell, a most competent civil servant, did his job and kept her fully informed.

Moreover, it is a lie which had she not told it she would have ceased to be Prime Minister. Setting up an inquiry, which has been forced on you by threats of resignation from the Attorney General and the Solicitor General, in the knowledge that if you did not set it up you would have detectives at the door of No10 Downing Street, when you already knew the answer to the inquiry would have been deemed unacceptable behaviour in a Prime Minister.

The leader in the *Guardian* of 22 July 1988 says of the Commission appointment "she has seen it as a means of solving the Brittan problem. She owes him one because he laid down his political life for hers during the height of the Westland crisis".

I am just an old fashioned MP who thinks the Prime Minister has an even more important debt to pay—that is her debt to parliament. She owes the House of Commons the truth. I am terribly sad that of all papers the *Guardian* should have a leader making the assumption that the Prime Minister of the day deceived the House of Commons and therefore naturally owes the scapegoat of her lying a plum job with a huge salary. What has happened to the integrity of our public life? What would C P Scott and A P Wadsworth sitting at their desk in Manchester have written about a Prime Minister who caused a by-election in the north of England in order to reward or placate or possibly keep silent the MP who had shouldered the blame for the events surrounding the leaking of a law officer's letter? Remember that the Prime Minister herself understood the peril of her position by remarking on 27 January 1986: "I may not be Prime Minister at six o'clock tonight."

If an MP cannot speak his mind in the Commons where can he speak it? But there is more to it. I have repeatedly made the same charges without the protection of privilege in public meetings. Furthermore I have set out the charges in my book *Misrule* published by Hamish Hamilton who have extremely careful libel lawyers. Contrary to belief and image I am an exceedingly cautious man and careful with fact.

## Sports Minister on the run

Sports Minister Colin Moynihan who is in the process of axeing more than half the members of the Sports Council is himself in danger of being knifed in the back.

Tory backbench sports committee chairman, John Carlisle, has complained officially to the government Chief Whip, David Waddington, that Moynihan showed discourtesy and political misjudgment by not consulting his committee—or anyone else—about his proposals to halve Sports Council membership and to privatise the management of local authority sports facilities.

Former Tory sports ministers Sir Eldon Griffiths, Neil Macfarlane, Dick Tracey and Sir Hector Monro have also all made their separate protests to the Whips. One ex-sports minister has suggested that Moynihan should be sacked.

The feeling is that, because of Moynihan's political insensitivity, the entire sporting world has been antagonised, leaving Labour to exploit the situation.

Tory backbenchers are angry because in the past, governments of either party have always produced a White Paper or discussion document and had detailed talks with the regional councils of the Sports Council and even with the opposition sports spokesperson before changing policy. The object has been to keep sport as apolitical as possible. Moynihan's break with this tradition has caused what one MP called an "enormous schism" in the governing bodies of sport.

The boyish Moynihan is proposing to keep only one representative voice from the ten Sports Council regional chairmen. The critics argue that the regional chairmen have been invaluable in keeping ministers in touch with grass-roots thinking, particularly in the inner cities. There is also, perhaps, an element of *amour propre* in the criticism of Moynihan since the council members now being dismissed were appointed by former ministers.

The Sports Minister argues that sport has changed radically and that he has recruited stars like Sebastian Coe, Clive Lloyd, Steve Ovett, Tessa Sanderson and Duncan Goodhew to serve instead. "We need gold medal support in administration and management if we are to expect gold medal performances on the fields of



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play," Moynihan told the Commons this month.

Tory MPs say that, although he does not recognise it, this is what he has already in regional chairmen, famous and highly respected sportsmen who have been proving their administrative ability as well. Shadow Sports Minister Denis Howell says talk of gold medal administration is nonsense when people like Seb Coe and Tessa Sanderson are not able to turn up for meetings because of their Olympic commitments, and others like Goodhew are understandably busy making a living.

It is not simply protests in the Commons which Moynihan has to face. Three of the regional chairmen are refusing to go quietly. Both Air Vice Marshall Larry Lamb, the eastern region chairman, a former international rugby referee and still chief executive of the Badminton Association, and John Humphries, the southern region chairman, who is regarded as a first class administrator, are refusing to retire before their term expires. Richard Sharp, the former England rugby captain, is also expressing dissent.

Sharp, who is chairman of the south-western region, has made known his irritation to Cabinet Secretary Sir Robin Butler. Butler played with Sharp when he was captaining the Oxford University fifteen.

Among the others being asked to step down are Ken Ohlson, chairman of the south-east, and Peter Yarrington, former England second-row forward and vice president of the Rugby Football Union.

Former sports ministers have been pressed to lead a public lobby to stop the changes, but have so far refused to attack a colleague in the open, however strongly they feel privately.

The Sports Council rebels are protected by the Royal Charter promoted by Eldon Griffiths specifically to safeguard the independence of Sports Council members. He did it to stop a Labour government appointing its own nominees. Moynihan is seen as reversing the policy.

Not all the blame is being heaped on Moynihan, however. Tory backbenchers recognise that he has the handicap of a boss, in Enviroment Secretary Nicholas Ridley, who does have a voice in the Cabinet, but is not the slightest bit interested in sport. Some suspect that Ridley is actually trying to downgrade it.

While Moynihan survived this week's junior ranks reshuffle, Mrs Thatcher may soon be forced to respond to the "seething discontent" about his performance. Spectators cannot remember the prospects of politics in sport being so lively for a long time. *John Lewis*

# Pinochet hooked on power

"Pinochet is hooked on power like a drug addict, and cannot give it up," says Christian Democratic party leader Andres Saldivar of Chile's ruler for the past 15 years. Now Pinochet has all but confirmed that he will be the armed forces' candidate in a forthcoming plebiscite designed to keep him in power until 1997.

The plebiscite is provided for by the 1980 constitution which the armed forces introduced following a referendum (widely thought to have been fraudulently won). Under this constitution, by the end of 1988 Chileans are to vote on whether or not they accept as president the sole candidate put forward by the four heads of the armed forces, of whom Pinochet, as commander-in-chief of the army, is the most influential member.

If they vote "Yes" to this candidate, then he is supposed to oversee a return to "full, participatory, stable democracy" by 1997, though in fact, he and the armed forces will retain a role in the country's political affairs. Should the unbelievable happen, and the "No" vote triumph, then General Pinochet stays in power anyway, at least for a further year while he organises alternative elections.

Pinochet is taking no chances. He has been campaigning for months, even though the junta still has not officially adopted him as their candidate. "It's me or chaos," is his continual threat, as he reminds the faithful that "we are the only country that has defeated Communism". He can probably count on between a quarter and a third of the voters—the right-wing members of the National Renovation party and others, who have benefitted from his regime and are afraid of a left-wing take-over.

The opposition are, as usual, in a mess. Most of the thirteen opposition parties (the sheer number of them speaks of their sectarian disarray) do not want to be playing this game anyway. They dismiss the 1980 constitution as a farce since it was not voted on by a democratically elected body, and because it excludes all parties which preach the class struggle or threaten family life. They see the coming plebiscite as another farce, since Pinochet is bound to win. But in order to have any kind of say in the political life of Chile, they have been forced to join in.

They have also used whatever campaigning opportunities they have been conceded. When Ricardo Lagos, a leader of the Socialist party appeared on television at the end of June, (the first TV appearance of an opposition politician in 15 years), he pulled no punches, claiming that Pinochet "promises the country eight more years with torture, assassination, and violation of human rights. To me, it seems inadmissible that a Chilean is so ambitious for power as to pretend to hold it for 25 years."

Pinochet does seem that ambitious, and also appears to be holding nearly all the cards. The authorities used Lagos' outburst as further proof that the opposition want only a return to strife. When Andres Saldivar's remark was published in the magazine *Analisis*, he went unpunished, but Monica Gonzalez, the journalist who interviewed him, was charged with "insulting the President". Another 27 journalists are facing charges for slandering the chief of state or the armed forces, or publishing material from the banned Marxist parties. Death threats and daily harassment are a commonplace for opposition leaders, and the police and armed forces are quick to break up any opposition demonstration.

The date for the plebiscite has not yet been fixed—another card Pinochet is keeping up his sleeve. He is sure to announce it at the last minute, in the hope of catching the opposition off-guard. His opponents are making desperate calls for "fairplay", and hope that teams of observers, from the Socialist International and other groups, will visit Chile for the plebiscite and denounce any malpractice.

Few though doubt the result. If it seems there is any risk of a massive shout of "No", then Pinochet can always do as the ruling party in Mexico has just done when its candidate was in trouble, and pull the plug out of the computer counting the votes. *Nick Caistor.*

# Animal lovers block union

The British Union for the Abolition of Vivisection is being lambasted for the treatment of its own workers as it prepares for its annual general meeting this weekend. The union representing workers at BUAV is calling for a boycott of the organisation.

Mat Daly, who left BUAV in December, said: "These people are promoting animal rights, but union rights seem to go by the board."

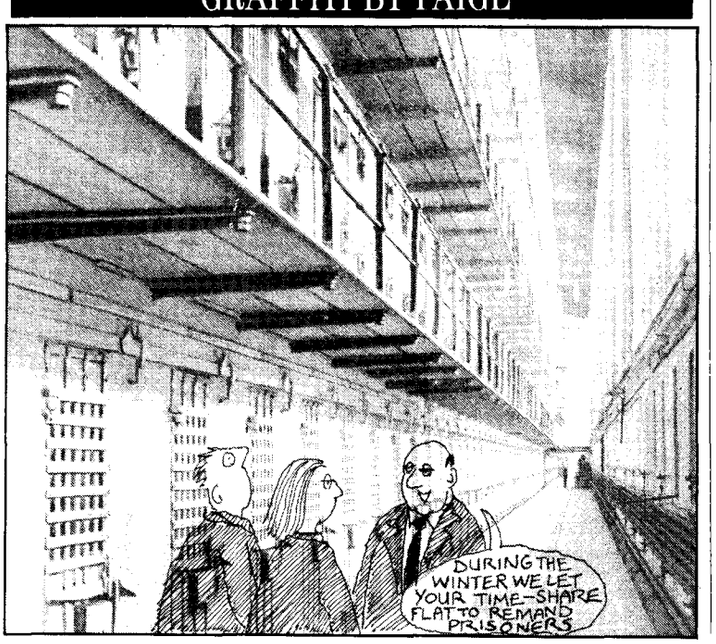
At issue is the BUAV's contract of employment. The Association of Clerical, Technical and Supervisory Staffs (ACTSS) representing half the staff, opposed the contract. It objected, among other things, to the requirement to work unlimited overtime and extra days without compensatory pay or days off. Mat Daly says it is not uncommon for staff to work twelve hours a day, 28 days in a row.

In May, BUAV issued an ultimatum to staff members who had not signed the contract. They also withdrew unilaterally from the union agreement, without giving the stipulated three month's notice.

Chris Fisher, a spokesman for BUAV, denied that there was any intention of union bashing. But he accused the union of "negativity", and argued that the union agreement was "unworkable" and "divisive".

Fisher added that the union's call for a boycott had next to no support among the staff. This proved difficult to confirm since people known to oppose BUAV's action are "unavailable" at the office. Calls are put through instead to one Chris Fisher. *James Stephenson*

## GRAFFITI BY PAIGE



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# Fast bucks replace fast reactors

Three hundred and thirteen years after Charles II paid for an observatory to be set up at Greenwich, the British government is finally fixing a science policy to decide how the money it puts into research and development—now over £4 billion a year—should be spent. The policy's first victims are the 2,600 UK Atomic Energy Authority workers who will lose their jobs as a result of last week's decision to get out of work on fast reactor development.

Since fast reactors can be used to make fresh fuel from "spent" fuel produced by the "thermal" reactors in use today, they are billed by the nuclear industry as the long-term solution to almost all Britain's energy problems. In 1975, the UKAEA told the Royal Commission on the Environment that the UK would have 40 of them by the year 2000. Now the true number is likely to be zero.

The cosy relationship between the industry and the government since the 1950s—during which the UKAEA has never had to argue a public case for the money it has received—is coming to an end because of new criteria for expenditure set by the government's scientific advisors. The Prime Minister's chief advisor, John Fairclough, and Sir Francis Tombs, head of the Cabinet Office's Advisory Council on Science and Technology (Acost), are now asking all the big research spenders to justify the money they get. The idea is to find cash which can be redirected towards applied research with a definite payback. This would have meant serious trouble for the UKAEA at any time, but the cash-for-results policy is being implemented at a particularly difficult time.

Fast reactors are going seriously out of fashion. Clinch River in Tennessee, has been closed. At Kalkar in West Germany, a new fast reactor, just built at a cost of over £2 billion may never open. Even France, the world's main supporter of fast reactor research, is slowing down its work in the field. Part of the problem is safety. Fast reactors are far more dangerous even than present-day thermal ones.

The UK is now a member of a West European fast reactor consortium with France and West Germany as the leading members. The UK's role in the group was to build a massive plant at Dounreay to process spent fuel from other countries' reactors. Now that the other members are losing their enthusiasm for fast reactors, the UK has no real part to play in the consortium. However, the killer blow for Dounreay seems to have been the realisation that fast reactor work would produce no return for many decades, if ever.

The remaining question is where the cash saved at Dounreay (and at Windscale and Harwell, where work is also being cut) will now be spent. It is unlikely to go into other forms of energy R&D. The electricity industry is already cutting back on research saying that it will be a government task, not its own, after privatisation. The government, meanwhile, has produced a White Paper on renewable energy which says the industry should pay for it.

More likely to benefit are schemes like the research councils which are proposing 20 University Research Centres for work on everything from advanced materials to oceanography. The centres are designed to attract private as well as state funding, which the govement regards as the sign that they are doing worthwhile work. The decision to get out of fast reactor work may be the right one but the same logic leads to no long-term research without an obvious industrial payback. *Martin Ince*

# Lambeth to block County Hall hotel

Lambeth Council is bracing itself to fight a lengthy rearguard action against property developers and the Department of the Enviroment over the fate of County Hall, the former riverside home of the GLC, which was sold last month.

The site's purchasers, a consortium called the County Development Group plans a 450-room hotel, 335 residential units and a business and conference centre in the main building. Its plans—to be submitted in the autumn—also include two new office blocks and a shopping mall.

But LBL is unlikely to entertain the scheme. Last year, it unexpectedly won support from a public inquiry for its view that the buildings be retained for London-wide governmental use. County Hall still houses the Inner London Education Authority (due for abolition in 1990) and the self-dissolving London Residuary Body (which sold off the buildings).

Labour-run Lambeth's chair of planning, Jenny Stiles, says the council will study any planning application seriously. "We will of course respect our own district plan and in that we

West Enders
Relax Big Boy, - you can't Buck the Market!!
The Awakening Conscience after William Holman Hunt
28·25·7·88
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certainly don't have an hotel at County Hall."

LBL's position is attacked as "unreasonable" by David Jackson, chair of the CHDG consortium. "We want jobs for people in the area, not political dogma." He is keen to promote the "community aspects" of the scheme, including an on-site recruitment agency to employ local people in the redevelopment. There are also plans for two theatres—one "for community use".

But the final act of the drama could well be directed by Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley. Last year he overturned the public inquiry inspector's recommendation that County Hall be retained for local government. Lambeth appealed against that ruling and won. Ridley has since counter appealed and the two sides are due for another courtroom scene in October. *Sean O'Neill*

## THIS ENGLAND

£3 Book Tokens for entries printed. (Postcards please.)

●Housewife Anne Reynolds, of Tintagel, Cornwall, found her highlighted hair had changed to dark green after she washed it.

"Apparently it has happened to a lot of people in the area who have bleached hair," she said.

Seventy-four people have now signed a petition demanding £10 off their water rates. —*Daily Mirror* (George Moor)

●Fire brigade chiefs in Nottinghamshire have ordered a cover-up of calendars and posters showing nude women at 14 stations and have sent their men stick-on underwear to help in the operation. —*Daily Telegraph* (R A England)

●British Rail chiefs have been forced to redesign toilets on new Sprinter trains, after passengers mistook the emergency stop for a flush.

Passengers have brought dozens of trains to a shuddering halt by pulling the bright red emergency lever, instead of the little flush button nearby.

Embarrassed BR chiefs have been forced to redesign 50 trains costing "several thousand pounds" because of the fault. —*Evening Post* (Liselotte Leschke)

●Executive looks call for minimal make-up from Yves Saint Laurent Beaute. Liquid Creme Foundation No 1, £13. Eyelids touched with Eyeshadow Duo No 45, £14.50. Lips sugared pink in No 45, £15. Cheeks shaded with Double Play Blush No 3, £15, with a dusting of All Over Face Powder Silk Finish No 1, £13. —*Woman's Journal* (R M Simpson)

# PARLIAMENT

# Gleeful savagery

*Sarah Benton*

In a quiet moment in the press gallery's tea room last week a black, female, catering worker sat crooning "stand by your rights" over and over again. Perhaps she was responding to the disquiet amongst black people in the House, from MPs to staff, at the overzealous acts of a wholly white, wholly male, parliamentary officialdom. Perhaps she was responding to the mood that gripped the House for the first half of the week. The Speaker described it as farce, in pained tones.

To a less polite person it felt more like an uncontrolled orgy of gleeful savagery led, if that is not too structured a concept, by Conservatives Eric Forth (now a minister in the DTI), Edward Leigh and Tony Marlow. For the first time, I felt that perhaps William Golding was onto something in his account of the cruel bloodlust of small boys when the constraints of civilisation are removed. For some Conservative backbenchers it seems to have been the combination of fatal weakness in an opponent and black Africa itself which so stirred the blood. As the word "bottoms" reduces small boys to convulsions, so the word Zimbabwe seems to do the same for big ones.

It began on Monday at Welsh questions, a normally dreary session. Conservatives were already hunting for the gaps where they could make their point. Tony Marlow found one first. Could Peter Walker say if someone aspiring for a position of leadership in or outside Wales, who found it difficult to control his temper, could find facilities where he could get treatment? Eric Forth wondered if Peter Walker thought the Leader of the Opposition had learned anything that would help Welsh people from his visit to Zimbabwe. Much rolling about on the benches.

Points of order offered new gaps. Edward Leigh asked the speaker to make an announcement about the return of "the bomber-jacketed ambassador". They found this jolly funny though not as uproarious as Eric Heffer's suggestion that it might be appropriate to use the occasion of Nelson Mandela's birthday to discuss his fate. The Speaker's comment that this was indeed "a matter of great concern" received yelps of derision.

The chase was now on. Eric Forth got another stone in. Had the Speaker made it his business to contact the speaker in Zimbabwe about recent distressing incidents? Neil Hamilton, victor in the *Panorama* libel case, wondered if the Speaker should always accompany the Leader of the Opposition abroad to be on hand to vouch for his identity.

The next day was much the same. Even the Prime Minister failed to hear a question through the riotous din, but as it was her comment on aid to African armed forces that had triggered hysteria in her followers, perhaps she did not mind. The Speaker did. Although he had managed to avoid calling Eric Forth, who leapt up excitedly at every opportunity, he failed to stop Edward Leigh, of peace through war fame, using points of order to ask whether the speaker should offer his chaplain for spiritual guidance to a man who sang Jerusalem "at the first sign of a gun". "The standard of behaviour" said Mr Speaker, had been "absolutely disgraceful".

You might argue that opposition MPs would act in just the same way if a Conservative leader were made to look an idiot. But they don't. Successive potential humiliations for government ministers—Westland, Zircon, Nicholas Ridley's attempt to keep his own back yard clear, the undermining of Nigel Lawson—could all have sparked similar riots of aggressive contempt. But they didn't.

Labour MPs never make the government look contemptible. And the fact they they don't increases the contempt of this group of Conservatives. The hesitancy, withdrawal, sense of despairing defeat amongst all opposition members merely increases the crowing sense of invincibility amongst some Tories which, in turn, makes them behave as though they are bound by no rules of civilised behaviour. We should all be worried. If a government can only be held properly to account by an opposition then this government has become almost unaccountable.

Meanwhile, honourable Conservatives (and there are some) hope that the cracking of the government into fiefdoms round Thatcher, Hurd and Lawson will break Thatcherism's fevered grip over parliamentary business. But they cannot operate outside the power bases of modern Conservatism. As more and more state responsibilities become privatised, the 1990s will bring us a society in which the exercise of power simply cannot be checked or scrutinised through the political process.

Still, take heart. Last week Westminster also held its ceremony to celebrate the Glorious Revolution. There's nothing like the chance to put on a pair of tights and a swirling skirt coat and bow down before the Queen to restore a man's sense of propriety.



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# 1688 and all that

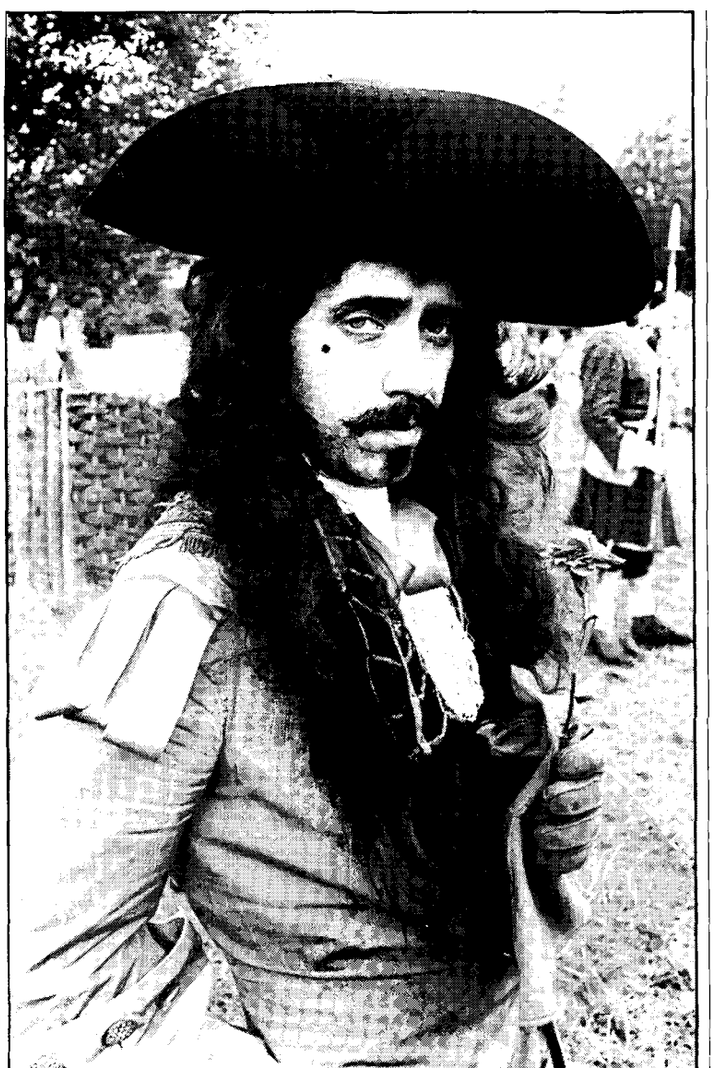
*Why do people want to get all dressed up about it? Amanda Mitchison on history as costume drama*

Three cheers for Britain! With Beaconlighting bonanzas, knockout shows, and mixed Anglo-Dutch golf foursomes we are this year simultaneously celebrating two centenaries — of a foreign fleet victoriously scattered by British winds and of another foreign fleet gloriously landed in Devon, to allow the invader to crawl up to London and take over the throne while the king had nose-bleeds and everybody else hedged their bets and looked the other way.

And while the 1688 revolution was a listless rather than a bloodless affair, the tercentenary celebration is more lively, providing a heritage toehold to tearooms and stately homes throughout the south west. For the millionaire Peter de Savary the glorious revolution is a gold mine: the prince actually stayed in his Littlecote house at Hungerford. De Savary is making the most of it. Last weekend, in front of an audience of some 400 tourists, a lookalike Prince William arrived, departed, rearrived and redeparted from what the brochure calls "the land that is trapped in time".

The theme park, like an Edwardian cake stand, offers tier upon jumbled tier of sweet historical tit-bits — a medieval garden, a Roman villa, steam trains, herbalists, palm readers, falconers, jousts, a gift shop, and a mead 'n' chips restaurant. By now, of course, the Littlecote public relations department has grown sensitive to criticism. They wince when the photographer approachs the knicker-bockered swain on the moped or the evilminded small boy sucking a lolly and wearing a monk's habit, a black mask, an axe and a luminous watch. Last weekend, however, the land of Littlecote was realer and saltier than usual. William of Orange came with a rabble of live-in soldiers, fops, floozies, and hangers-on from the English Civil War Society and the History Reenactment Workshop.

They welcomed William in the rain. As the prince speechified, two gentry in curly nylon wigs and a décolleté lady with thick make-up bantered in Earl of Rochester style:



Fop 1: "Sir, do you call me a cur to my face?"

Fop 2: "Nay sir, a fine lap spaniel to lick thy lady's fancy."

Lady Chloris: (*changing he subject*) "Me-thinks the weather it is most inclement. Indeed, Charles, my complexion will be ruined!"

Fop 1: "We should hasten inside. But then, my dear, (*heavy emphasis*) you are already running."

The troops were dirty, stubbly and disagreeably authentic. They wore sagging stockings, galumphing boots tied with ribbons, grubby neck-ties and regimental jackets made of an absorent worsted material which looked much the worsted for wear.

One morose platoon shuffled to attention with pikes askew. Meanwhile the musketeers attempted to insert bayonets in their gun barrels. The Prince of Orange smiled frostily and wafted a ventilating hand. He didn't seem to notice that a proud little pawn of England in the back row was having problems keeping his bayonet upright. The Earls of Rochester, however, spotted him immediately.

Fop 1: "That man can scarce have come from the plough. You see the large lumpkin I am discoursing upon? You see the hayseeds about him?"

Lady Chloris: "His weapon droops!"

Fop 2: (*snuffling into a cambric handkerchief*) "Aye, indeed, a most limp appendage . . ."

The dialogue was ad lib, but the re-enactors had researched the scene down to the incompetent drill and the fumbling with the bayonets. For the seventeenth century English army was indeed scruffy and insalubrious. The common soldier slept rough in his uniform, carried all his possessions with him and was rarely paid. He didn't yet know how to march in time and was still only getting used to bayonets. His firearm was dangerous and inaccurate; his sword blunt and usually used only to chop wood and frighten republicans.

After the display a trooper called Alan showed an inquiring small boy how to fire a musket. He explained the origin of the expressions "lock, stock and barrel" and "flash in the pan" (an explosion which does not penetrate the barrel of the gun and fire the bullet). He opened one of the twelve "apostles" on his belt to show the boy where gunpowder was stored and demonstrated how to hold a "match" (a long piece of fuse made of cord dipped in saltpetre). At night, he explained, an army would look just like "12,000 cigaretts glowing in the dark". Opponents could be tricked by soldiers leaving matches hanging from trees while they attacked from behind.

Would the trooper, I asked, have liked in real life to have been a soldier? "Oh no I would have hidden in a ditch. And by my age I'd probably have been dead anyway. Average age of mortality in my home town was 28 then." He started a long exposition on bare-foot soldiers, typhus and why these problems had stopped the Earl of Essex from moving his troops during the civil war.

I was to get worse from Ian, an NHS executive officer, who was playing the part of a blood-covered master barber surgeon in the living history encampment, where soldiers lounged and camp followers boiled bones in a cauldron for supper. The commonest ailment, according to Ian, was trenchfoot, an unsavoury condition in which rampant fungal infection or skin loss could eventually



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lead to gangrene. Not without relish, Ian showed me his knife, his saw and an instruction sheet beginning with the words: "The afflicted should pay the surgeon firstly in case he may die on the table . . ."

Many other soldiers shared this pedagogic flair. You couldn't strike up a conversation without someone bringing up the price of gunpowder in 1685 or naming the breeds of fleas. I now know that in the seventeenth century the potato was grown as a decorative plant. I can also be a fearful bore about how seventeenth century officers slept on *pallaisses* (straw-filled sacks) protected from cavalry charges by *Swedish feathers* (clusters of spikey poles) and from enemy fire by wicker fencing fortified with *gabions* (baskets filled with soil).

With this antiquarian zeal it is little wonder that the living history movement has witnessed bitter wrangles over authenticity. Many years ago the ECWS split with the Sealed Knot over what seems to have been a row about using crimplene and velcro. Meanwhile today the History Reenactment Workshop, which limits its performances to civilian scenes and royal retinues, criticises the ECWS for holding mock battles which can never be truly realistic.

The society recognises the problem: "if you get in the way of cannon shot you fall down very prettily and hope nobody treads on your hand. In real life you would have been blown to smithereens. We can't have that." In the interess of safety, the pikes are rubber headed and fallen soldiers are removed from the field, except on a few occasions such as at Warwick where "it was a long thin battle along a river bank. A whole regiment was blown away by massed musketeers. When the public had moved on we just crawled down the hill after them and went in again at the back."

But according to Alan the ECWS has another claim to authenticity: "We are re-enacting precisely what the English militia did. They also never expected to fight. They met up for a weekend, drank lots of beer, put on a show for the local dignitaries on Sunday. They even made mock castles and held formal sieges."

The ECWS has its own codes of chivalry. Members gain the right to wear special coloured ribbons after especially gruelling battles or acts of bravery on the field. Inevitably reenactment shades over into reality. The soldiers talk about "warming up" to a part and "the kick when you really believe what you are doing". Likewise the members' political beliefs will probably influence whether they join up as parliamentarians or cavaliers (the Glorious Revolution is the latest period the society covers). Alan, recalls: "When we entered

Taunton as Monmouth's troops in 1985, 8,000 people turned out and clapped spontaneously. A lot of us had tears in our eyes."

As regular readers of this magazine will know, this summer I have spent more weekends than I care to count watching the British dress up in silly clothes, drink beer, and get rained upon. But the English Civil War Society beggars disbelief. I cannot understand why a man, whose working life is spent trying to prop up the NHS, should care to pass the weekend sitting on a pile of straw with a raw onion and a mustard poultice, showing the public how they used to cure wind by poking the stomach with a spike. Ask the soldiers why they do it and they talk about the educational value or the comradeship. Others are purely in it for the battles, still more are secret exhibitionists; "I'm an accounts clerk. Oh please don't say that I'm a boring bogcrackit who enjoys dressing up as a cavalier."

But they all share a pure pleasure in history for its own sake. At Littlecote the public was entralled *and educated* by the ECWS. I am not suggesting that Peter de Savary starts a live enactment of 1575 when Wild William Darrell threw a newborn baby into the fire at the landing of Littlecote house, but he should stop wondering whether the gibbet upsets his customers.

The heritage industry has nothing to lose from making history more precise and more honest. The public do not require their past anaesthetised and sugared. For just as we can escape from the present by idealising the past, so we can idealise the present by showing history with warts, fistulas, burnt babies, amputations, gabions, and all.

Photographs by Philip Polglaze



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# In flight entertainment

*Competence may not be enough for Dukakis. Compromise may be too much for Jackson. Alexander Cockburn reports.*

I was standing on the Convention floor by the Vermont delegation as Senator Lloyd Bentsen approached the rostrum on Thursday night to commence his own narcotic observations. Some of the Jackson delegates said the Vermont delegation had caused the printing of 2,000 placards saying "No Contra Aid", and distributed them throughout the hall. The idea was to remind the world that Bentsen, described in the *Atlanta Journal* as "courtly" and "happier drinking Chassagne Montrachet than long-neck Lone Star beer", had been a keen supporter of the use of US dollars to pay contras to kill Nicaraguan civilians.

I'm glad to see that some of the Vermonters—Cindy Milkstein, Lisa Kiley, Liz Blum, Ellen David Friedman and Mike Korczykowski (the minority member of the Vermont Jacksonian fraction in that he is a man, white and not Jewish) make a terrific din, holding up their placards and shouting its message. Theirs was almost the only exhibition of the placards throughout the hall and neighbouring delegates were visibly and audibly angered, trying to block the cards from view with their own loyal advertisements to the Dukakis/Bentsen ticket. Thus took place the only audible public objection, in plenary session, to the selection by acclamation of a man partially responsible for the deaths of thousands of innocent people in Nicaragua, not to mention Angola.

Jackson played a discreet role in engineering the near total restraint of this demonstration, using a small portion of the political capital he had amassed by his shrewd manoeuvring and by his speech to the convention and the country on the second evening of the convention. It was probably the first time a mass audience had heard Jackson in extended flight, and though the second, and successful half of his address was a splicing of Jackson's golden hits of the campaign trail, it established him irrefutably as someone of national weight and long-term consequence in the political life of the country.

Fine though the speech was, one should not forget the appalling nonsense of his rhetoric about unity, about needing two wings to fly and the hawk lying down with the dove. No bird I've ever heard of ever flew with wings of different sizes, trying to flap at different speeds. Most sensible doves would never dream of going to bed with a hawk.

This was an effort of Jackson to sketch in the dialectics of unity and coalition. He did a much better job the morning after Mike Dukakis's speech accepting the Democratic nomination. At breakfast time 1,200 Jackson delegates, most of them running on three hours of sleep for the fourth night in a row, gathered in a Marriott marquee hall for a meeting with Jackson. Finally Jackson walked in with Dukakis and Bentsen, to argue the case for working with the ticket, for working within the Democratic Party, for accepting the Bentsen nomination without terminal uproar, and to show Dukakis and Bentsen that here were 1,200 activists with minds of their own.

The rhetoric was more relaxed than the prime-time style as Jackson, in front of Dukakis and Bentsen, made his case for a dialectical relationship to power: "close enough to serve, far enough to challenge." Martin Luther King, Jackson said, had asked Lyndon Johnson to put through civil rights legislation and Johnson told him that he could never get it through congress. Then came the marches and the violence and Johnson moved. So there were the ingredients of change, Jackson said: "The White House on the one hand and street heat on the other." Each time Jackson played with the idea of "street heat" the delegates roared and Dukakis, Bentsen and Paul Kirk creased their faces into somewhat strained jocularity at the idea of this heat.

But there are obvious questions to ask: how much of a substantive rainbow organisation will survive Jackson's 1988 campaign, or would survive if Jackson were to go into permanent exile? The answer is that it's clearly too early to see how much building will be done or how interested Jackson really is in urging it along. One thing seemed far clearer than I had imagined it would: Jackson has absolutely no interest in anything other than the Democratic Party as the vehicle for any agenda he considers to be within the realms of practical consideration. Jackson is clear in his own mind that he truly can and will one day be president of the United States.

*"Competence won't fix the war economy or reform the international economic system..."*

The rosy afterglow now flushing the faces of Democrats should not obscure the realities of what a Dukakis presidency would portend. Neither in the primary campaign, nor in his speech at Atlanta nor in his subsequent stump oratory (this last being essentially Reaganesque in timbre) has Dukakis given the slightest sign of understanding that the problems of late capitalist America are not going to be solved by competent management, his sole plank. *Within the terms of the system* the United States has been run pretty competently for the last eight years. The country is in its 67th month of continuous growth. Competence won't fix the war economy or reform the international economic system. Dukakis has developed neither the ideas nor the constituency which would allow him to arrive in Washington in January, 1988 and embark on the major programmes—easily as far-raching as anything Roosevelt did in the 1930s—of redistribution, public financing, roll-back of corporate control, restructuring of relationships with the third world—which would be necessary if he is to do anything but continue to tinker with the system, probably to its detriment.

So what do progressives, leftists, left-liberals, radicals—take your ascription of choice—make of the world after Atlanta, as it tilts towards November and beyond? Well, they certainly know that coalition with the Dukakis crowd has already entailed compromise. That moment, right before Bentsen spoke on Thursday night, when only a handful of delegates, mostly in the Vermont section, put up their "No Contra Aid" signs, could have been very different. When the Vermonters earlier handed out 2,000 such signs they were enthusiastically received by many delegates who later sat on them. Why? They sat on them because a well- respected member of Jackson's staff sent out word to the floor that this is what they should do. In other words, part of the deal made between Dukakis and Jackson was that there would be no perturbing demonstrations from the floor; in effect, no "street heat".

The argument justifying such a deal and compliance by the would-be demonstrators is being put like this: white New Left activists need to redraw their political maps. A radical agenda has been pressed by a movement with a mass base, and the bargains that have been struck with Dukakis are not the intimations of co-optation but the tokens of survival. First principle: protect your people. Already the party structure is being changed and the platform along with it.

The first act of one of the Jackson appointments to the Democratic National Committee was to demand that Bentsen make a commitment to honour the party platform, not merely absent himself from Congress during the upcoming contra aid vote, but be present and vote against contra aid. This, presumably, is what street heat is all about. ●



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# The politics of masochism

*Paddy Ashdown wants an all-out anti-Labour campaign. John Rentoul warns he could be making rods for all our backs.*

If, as seems certain, Paddy Ashdown emerges today (Thursday) as leader of the Social and Liberal Democrats it won't be for his sense of strategy, but for a charisma formulated for frontloading the nation's television sets. Nevertheless, Ashdown has a strategy or more accurately an aim: to replace the Labour Party as the main opposition to the Conservatives.

It was this aim which apparently distinguished him most from his opponent, Alan Beith, who was prepared to countenance cooperation with Labour to get rid of the Tories. But what does Ashdown's apparently more aggressive position actually mean in practice?

Not very much, it would seem. When he announced his "longer-term strategy" of replacing the Labour Party, in the speech with which he launched his leadership campaign, Ashdown went on: "That said, it must be recognised that the balance of power may be a stage we have to accept along the way. If the British people, through the ballot box, say that no party should have a majority in parliament, then our role would be to act as guardians of the public interest and to see that government behaves responsibly."

So the SLD's "aim" is to replace the Labour Party, while its "role" is to make sure the government behaves responsibly. If that government were a minority Labour administration, the longer-term "aim" becomes meaningless. And it could hardly be "responsible" to sustain the Conservatives in office, because he began his speech by saying: "Our party is left of centre. It is on the side of ordinary people against unacceptable privilege and the abuse of power. We are therefore opposed to the Conservatives."

Ashdown's Thatcherite-like determination to exterminate socialism, it seems, amounts to no more than saying: the SLD are better at standing for what the Labour Party stands for than it is itself. Beith at least realises that if it is to have a point, the SLD has to stand for something distinctively different.

Far from emphasising the differences between the SLD and Labour, Ashdown's exterminism points up the similarities between the two parties' values by accepting a left-right dichotomy. If Ashdown is pressed on what is actually *wrong* with the Labour Party, he can only say that it is "just out of date" or fall back — as he did last weekend — on attacking Neil Kinnock as "the pathetic prisoner of the trade union movement, really unthinkable as a prime minister".

Neither are compelling arguments for destroying the Labour Party rather than cooperating with it — *especially* if it espouses similar values. When it comes to it, you can't insert a Marks and Spencer charge card between the *Preamble* to the SLD's constitution, which formed the basis of the merger in March, and Labour's *Statement of Aims and Values*, published later the same month. The first says "we seek to balance the fundamental values of liberty, equality and community", the second is a brief philosophical disquisition on how to do so.

To take one important example to illustrate the general point, the *Preamble* says of the "free market": "We want to see ... a competitive environment in which the state allows the market to operate freely where possible but intervenes where necessary." And Labour's *Aims and Values* says: "It is immoral as well as irrational to distribute some goods and services according to the market principle ... But there are many areas of the economy where market allocation and competition ... is essential."

No wonder Beith is forced to assert that the Labour Party's "true values have to be hidden from the electorate" and Liberals in general go on at length about Labour's "extremist" problem. A small minority of Labour Party members are "hard left", and have gained influence on a few local councils. But that influence is ebbing away.

And the critical event at this year's Labour Party conference won't be the leadership election (although Tony Benn's defeat will be significant in defining the size of the "hard left" minority), but the passing of the *Aims and Values* document and approval of the interim policy review papers. That, as if previous Labour governments had not already conclusively done so, will finally lay to rest the idea that socialism means a state-planned economy on the east European model.

Further, on issues of equality and civil liberties, these documents stake out a position for Labour which the SLD will find it hard convincingly to criticise (unless they take issue with the boring prose style).

However, it looks as though the Beith strategy of trying to set out a distinctively different stall in the values market has been rejected by the new party. Ashdown shares Labour's values, but thinks the Labour Party is old-fashioned, dominated by the trade unions, and badly led. These defects are so great that he finds it impossible to make common cause with Labour against the Conservatives.

This leads to some strange logical contortions.

If the SLD is in favour of proportional representation, for instance, then it ought to be in favour of political pluralism *in principle*, and celebrate multi-party politics as a positive virtue. Or is the point of proportional representation for the SLD simply (and cynically) to assist the party to replace Labour in a two-party system?

More fundamentally, there are only two possible "strategies" for the SLD that have any practical meaning. Either it wants to cooperate with Labour in removing Mrs Thatcher from office, or it will effectively sustain her in power while it pursues a "longer-term strategy". Of course, that argument applies with equal force to the Labour Party. But, by closing off even the possibility of a mutual interest with Labour, Ashdown will lose the opportunity to seize that initiative.

He may be making a virtue out of necessity, because Labour shows no sign of making common cause with the SLD. Robin Cook (the man with the strength to shadow two ministers, at Health and Social Security) has pointed out that Labour has little or nothing to gain from a pre-election pact. Indeed, if Labour and the SLD both agreed to stand down third-placed candidates, most Labour supporters may well vote SLD, while SLD supporters would probably divide equally between Labour and the Tories, cancelling each other out. At the last election the Alliance might have won 50 seats instead of 22 if such a pact had operated, whereas Labour would have gained nothing and lost morale. But that would have halved Mrs Thatcher's majority to 56; and next time an electoral pact could make the difference between a minority Labour government and a fourth Tory term. That is a risk which it might be in Labour's interest to take.

Even if a pre-election pact remains impossible, Labour and the SLD could both benefit from being more open towards each other. Labour needs to convince former Alliance voters that its values are indeed the same as theirs. And for the SLD it is a way of working towards the cooperation with the Labour Party which is its only realistic route to power.

The only other "strategies" for the SLD are to aim for outright victory, which Ashdown accepts is unrealistic, or to accept his injunction to "learn to accept the disciplines of ...", yes, it is that "longer-term strategy" again. In practice that is likely to mean bending to Mrs Thatcher's rod for a fourth and even fifth term.

Not so much, better dead than red, as, better masochism than socialism. ●

*John Rentoul is a reporter for BBC TV's new current affairs programme, "On The Record". Stephen Cox of the Electoral Reform Society supplied the figures from which the estimate of the Alliance gains is made.*



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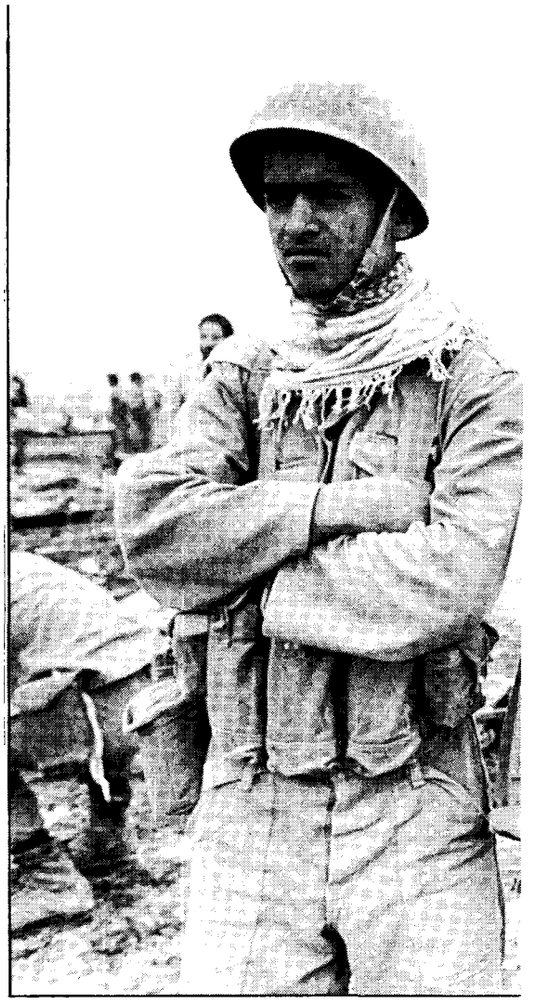
# A good revolutionary pause

*Iran wants to stop so it can carry on. Iraq wants to carry on so it can stop. Fred Halliday explains.*



**(Above) young battle weary Iranian volunteers during a break in the fighting. (Below) death in the afternoon observed by two Mullahs.**

The decision by Iran to accept the UN appeal for a ceasefire in the eight-year-long Iran-Iraq war was, in itself, a surprise. But it confirms a trait in the Iranian revolution, and in Khomeni himself, which has been evident in previous crises of the regime, notably the hostages crisis of 1979-1981.

Committed as Iran is to its view of Islamic revolution and to an intransigence in the face of international criticism, the Tehran regime is capable of abrupt changes of policy and substantial compromise when it judges that its core goal, the preservation of the revolution in Iran itself, is threatened.

If revolutionaries divide into those who overreach themselves and so prejudice the whole experiment they are engaged in (Napoleon), and those who can halt international initiatives when the revolution itself may be undermined (Lenin), Khomeini has shown himself, in this most recent decision, as in previous ones, to be a Lenin. As he himself puts it, if it is God's will that one has to drink poison, so be it.

The external constraints under which the Iranian revolution has been operating are evident enough: a loss of initiative in the land war with Iraq; a failure of significant pro-Iranian opposition to emerge inside Iraq, with the exception of the Kurdish areas to the north; increasing harassment by the US navy in the Gulf. Since Iranian advances in early 1986, the prospect of military victory over Iraq has receded.

To these external constraints can be added internal ones: a discrediting of the Revolutionary Guards in recent Iraqi advances; a growing economic crisis brought on by the paralysis of the industrial sector, and reflected in high inflation and mass unemployment in the cities; and a war-weariness that has demonstrated itself in falling military recruitment and outbursts of public anger.

Those favouring an end to war bided their time well. The parliamentary elections of April and May confirmed Rafsanjani in his position as speaker of the parliament, and paved the way for his nomination as commander-in-chief of the armed forces in June. The Airbus tragedy gave the regime a moral advantage, enabling it to tell Iranian opinion that world opinion was on its side, and providing a suitable opportunity to become involved in negotiations with the Security Council that also encompassed the issue of the ceasefire: in the end the council resolution passed on 20 July, with the agreement of Washington and Tehran, was a bromide.

The Iraqi advances at Fao, Shalamcheh and Halabja, in late May and June, when Iranian forces fell back with more than a little enthusiasm, were confirmation of Iran's military weakness. This compounded a sense of alarm that had been intensified by Iraqi missile and chemical warfare assaults earlier in the year.

Whether this "Leninist" calculation will succeed depends, in the first instance, on the progress of ceasefire talks. Since Iran announced its willingness to accept the ceasefire, it has become evident that the pattern of previous months was repeating itself—namely that it is Iraq which is ready to undermine the ceasefire, in part because it distrusts Iran, in part because Baghdad calculates that it could benefit from additional harrassment of Iran.

Iraq has also raised an issue which may constitute a stumbling block to any long-run settlement, namely the question of the Shatt al-Arab waterway, which runs for about 60 miles between the two countries into the Persian Gulf.

Iran used to monopolise control of this river to Iraq's detriment: but the 1975 Algiers agreement between the two states arranged for the river to be divided along the midstream or *thalweg* line.

Iraq now appears to be demanding that it have domination of the Shatt, and it is ominous that Iraqi statements on a settlement have not acknowledged the need to return to the Algiers agreement. It was Iraq which unilaterally abrogated this pact when it invaded Iran in September 1980, and failure to return to it could re-open a range of contentious territorial issues.

The Algiers agreement encompassed three questions: adjustment of the land border to the tune of a few hundred kilometres, the *thalwag* solution in the Shatt al-Arab, and, most importantly, an agreement on non-interference in each other's internal affairs.

Prior to 1975 Iran had been promoting the Kurdish revolt in Iraq, with CIA assistance, while Iraq had provided support to Iranian opposition forces (including some of those Arabs from southern Iran who, in August 1980, seized the Iranian embassy in London, with covert Iraqi support that the British government, for rea-



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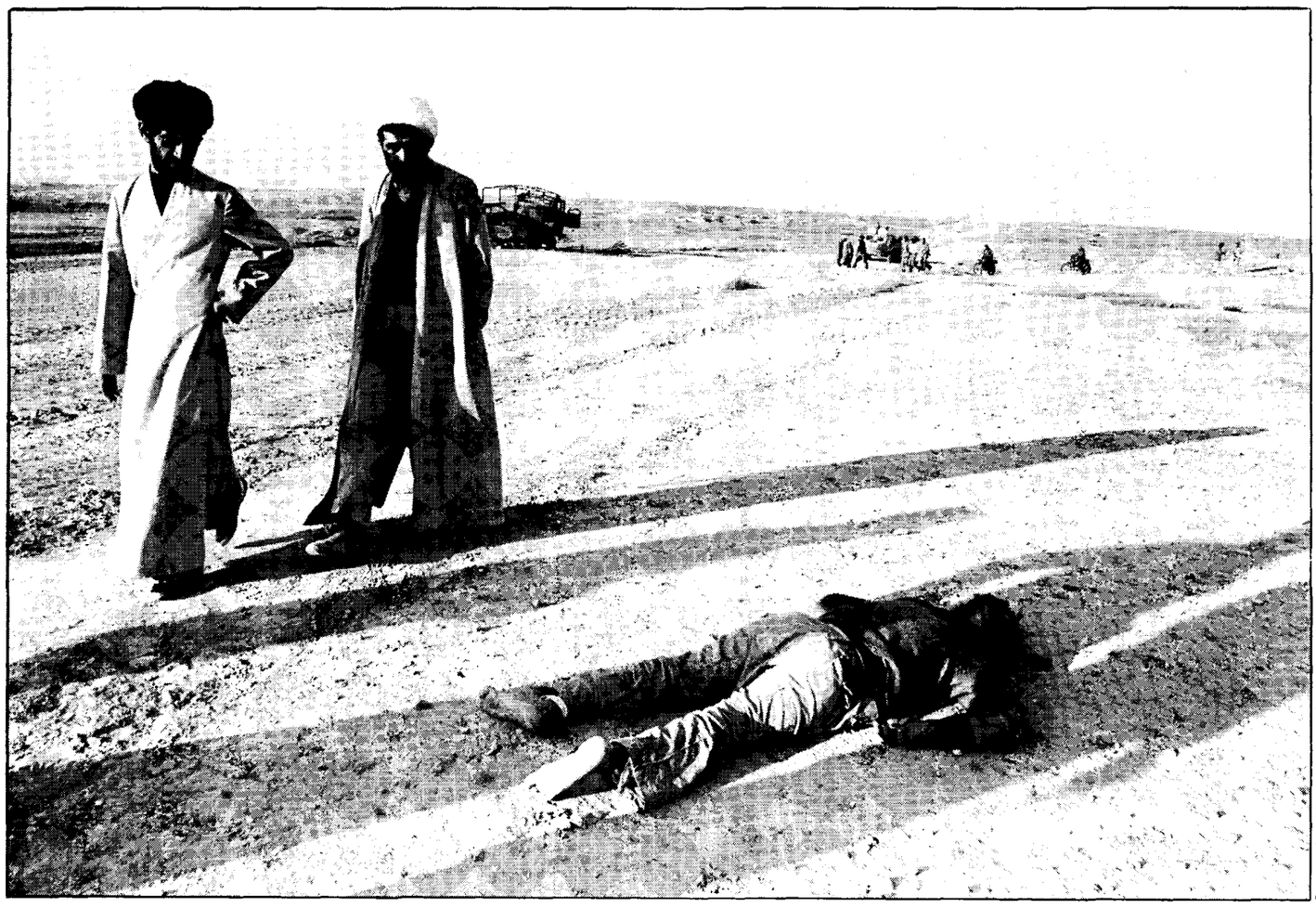
sons of convenience, has never protested about).

Within days of the Algiers agreement being signed in April 1975, assistance to these opposition forces ceased, and some only narrowly escaped being handed over by their erst-while backers to the other side.

If there is to be a settlement of the Iran-Iraqi conflict this time round the great losers will equally be the opposition forces in each state; the Iraqi Kurds and Islamic forces backed by Tehran, the Mujahidin and other Iranian opposition elements backed by Baghdad.

The issue of non-interference and of reciprocal support for each other's oppositions lies at the heart of the Iran-Iraq conflict, and will not go away even if a battlefield ceasefire can be arranged. This is not a war of intervention, as was Korea and Vietnam, or a territorial dispute between third world states, as is that between India and Pakistan and between Israel and the Arabs. Territorial issues are secondary to the strong political challenge each state poses to the other.

Thwarted in its campaign against the Ba'thists in Baghdad, the Iranian revolution may for a while turn its internationalist energies elsewhere—to Lebanon, where it has a substantial armed following, or to Afghanistan, where it hopes in the long run to rival Pakistan for Islamic hegemony. Peace with Iraq may be necessary for a time to consolidate the revolution at home and lessen external pressures: few can expect that this is the end of the story. ●



Photographs by Kaveh Golestan/Reflex



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# Spirit of outrage

*Despite spectacular publicity coups in the past, Greenpeace is now becoming more conventional. Rob Edwards believes it will always need a "touch of madness"*

Ruth Swindlehurst, a young marine biologist, was standing on the deck of the Greenpeace boat, *Moby Dick*, as it chugged up the Firth of Forth towards Rosyth Naval dockyard. Her thick long hair sprang uncontrollably from her embarrassingly new blue boilersuit. She smiled slightly nervously. "I just got my first hit of adrenalin," she said.

It was just after midday. The sun had been shining for most of the morning, making Leith docks, Leith's highrise blocks, Arthur's Seat and the Pentland hills look warm and soothing. The Forth was calm. The *Moby Dick*, bright green, emblazoned with a whale and a rainbow, was approaching the huge rust red diamonds of the rail bridge. Occasionally it passed puffins bobbing on the waves, and the odd seal, black head briefly above water.

Behind the polished wooden wheel, the skipper, Jonathan Castle, began grinning widely through his untamed ginger beard. Throwing his huge hand over his shoulder, he mentioned the navies he had previously encountered. "Icelandic, American, Soviet...and now for a first crack at the Royal Navy." He rubbed his hands in anticipation.

The plans for the afternoon had been well-laid: hosts of meetings in pubs and offices in London and aboard the *Moby Dick* assessing possibilities; a visit to one of Rosyth's open days for a recce; and a few feelers out to the media. Yet on the day there was an inevitable sense of anarchy, an acute awareness that everything depended on the Navy's reaction. "It's like war you see," said Greenpeace's anti-nuclear protest organiser, John Sprange, "total mayhem."

At first Greenpeace played by the rules. Using the on-board crane, the Greenpeace research fellow at London University, Dr Paul Johnston, took a sample of black mud from the middle of the river near Rosyth. He spooned some of it into a clean white plastic bottle and labelled it. Then Ruth Swindlehurst went out in an inflatable with a small hand-held grab and took more samples to be tested for radioactivity along the shore closer to Rosyth. All these activities were closely watched by Ministry of Defence police in inflatables and launches, as well as on the shore.

Greenpeace then radioed the Queen's Harbour Master at Rosyth and asked for permission to enter the dockyard to take samples close to where Britain's first nuclear-powered submarine, the now-defunct HMS *Dreadnought*, has been berthed for the last five years pending a decision on how to dispose of it. With crisp military courtesy, this was refused, although permission was given for one inflatable to enter the 150-metre restricted zone around the base to take another sample.

After a quick discussion, it was decided to take advantage of this offer before embarking on any direct action. But when the sampling craft, complete with TV camerawoman, sound recordist and stills photographers, began its work, the crisp military voice returned to the intercom telling the crew in the inflatable to stop filming immediately. If they did not stop, their film would be confiscated. They stopped.

One inflatable was dispatched with the first rolls of film and videotape to the nearest jetty where Greenpeace people were waiting with a car and a portable telephone. Then, just before 3 pm, two Greenpeace inflatables, closely followed by another with the inevitable cameras, sped off from the *Moby Dick* towards the grey boats, black hulks and huge cranes of Rosyth. The direct action had begun.

When they reached the harbour wall, four people jumped out and unfurled two banners saying "Don't Dump Dreadnought", while a fifth, John Sprange, headed towards the nearby *Dreadnought* with the intention of taking a sediment sample. Within seconds all five, plus the driver of one of the inflatables, were arrested by MoD police. Two of them were yanked backwards over a fence.

The other inflatable, despite being rammed by a police craft, managed to escape. It was pursued across the Forth at high speed in a dramatic zig-zag chase, with the police evidently intent on apprehending its driver, Hugh Stirling. With some skilful manoeuvring and some luck, he evaded capture and returned unscathed to the *Moby Dick*. "It was scary," he said.

Most of the event, which had lasted no more than a few minutes, was captured on video and film from the third inflatable despite the best endeavours of the police. Police boats sped close by, drenching the crew, until the video camera and sound recorder were put out of action by the saltwater.

The six—two women and four men from West Germany, Ireland and Britain—were all charged with trespass offences under the Rosyth port by-laws and released after two hours. The Greenpeace inflatable was impounded until the following day. It was, as John Sprange remarked in the pub later, "par for the course".

The image is the message. Greenpeace's central aim is to make images that will wing around the world stirring emotions, winning hearts and changing minds. Hence the crucial role of cameras and the organisation's unparalleled skill in ensuring that pictures get to TV stations and newspapers before their deadlines.

In 1973 when David McTaggart and Nigel Ingram were brutally attacked by French sailors after they had sailed the *Vega* into the French nuclear weapons testing zone round the Moruroa atoll in the South Pacific, Anne-Marie Horne was taking pictures. She quickly hid the camera, allowing the French to find another that had been deliberately left lying around as a decoy.

The French authorities denied that anyone had been beaten up. The serious injury to one of McTaggart's eyes had been caused, they insisted, by a fall. By releasing Horne's pictures to the international media, Greenpeace was able to prove that the authorities were lying. She had smuggled the film past French guards by secreting its canister painfully in her vagina.

Most of Greenpeace's images have been primarily of its own making: inflatables underneath barrels of nuclear waste crashing towards the sea; inflatables being sprayed with firehoses; people putting themselves between whales and the harpoons of the whalers. By far its most powerful image, however, was provided cour-



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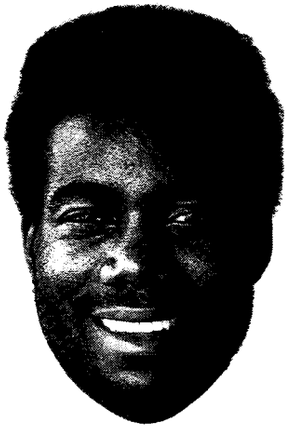
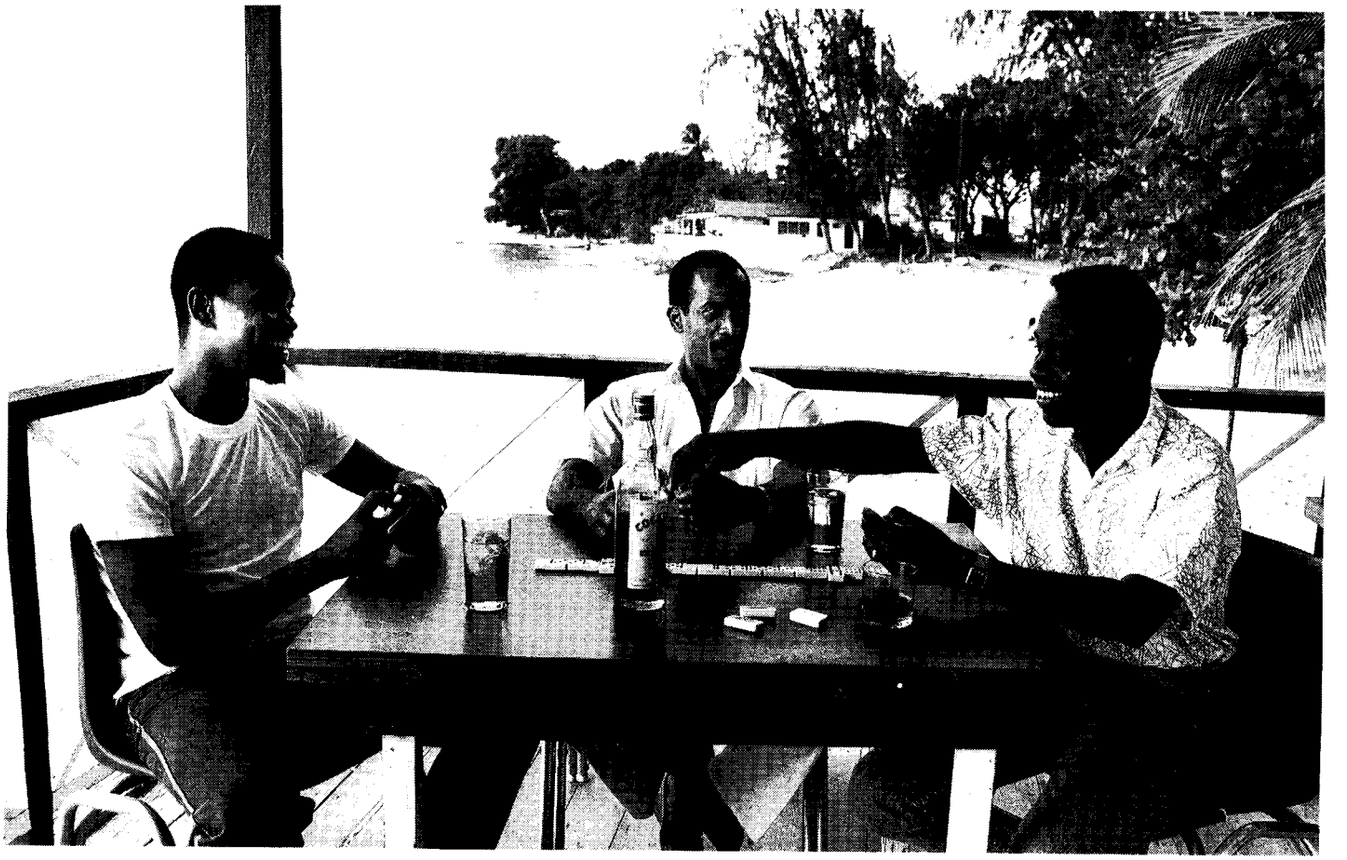


# Bars in Barbados stay open all day. Just long enough to enjoy a glass of golden Cockspur Rum.



"At Mullins Beach Bar we quite regularly open at 11 o'clock in the morning.

Up in Speightstown the fish have all been sold by then and most people have finished their business for the day.

So they come in here for a refreshing glass of golden Cockspur Rum.

Most of the guys from the District tend to drink it neat with ice or with a dash of orange juice.

As the sun sinks over Mullins Bay you'll often find them still playing dominos and drinking Cockspur Rum.

In fact it's lucky the bar stays open all day because they really seem to enjoy dominos!"

Malcolm Armstrong,
Barman, Mullins Beach Bar,
St. Peter, Barbados.

*If you like drinking you may like the taste of smooth Cockspur Rum.*



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**Within seconds the protestors were arrested by MoD police.**

tesy of the embittered French.

Just before midnight on Wednesday 10 July 1985, the *Rainbow Warrior* was sunk in New Zealand's Auckland harbour by two bombs attached to the boat by a frogman from the French secret service. It had been about to lead a flotilla of protest boats against more French bomb tests at Moruroa. The Portuguese-born photographer, Fernando Pereira, was killed because he went below to retrieve his cameras. As well as provoking a diplomatic crisis between New Zealand and France, and the eventual resignation of the French Defence Minister, Charles Hernu, the sinking of the *Rainbow Warrior* changed the nature of Greenpeace itself.

After arbitration, the organisation won £5 million in compensation from the French government. This has been invested in trusts dealing with nuclear weapons testing, East-West transboundary pollution, a special photographers' fund in memory of Pereira, and a replacement for the *Rainbow Warrior,* the *Grampian Fame* (currently being refitted in Hamburg). None has gone into day-to-day running costs.

Public support has mushroomed. Over the last couple of years the membership of Greenpeace UK has leapt from 70,000 to 143,000 and the number of staff employed in London has doubled to nearly 40. The UK annual turnover is £3 million. Internationally the organisation employs some 350 people in 17 national offices with an annual turnover of £45 million and a total membership of 2.5 million. It has seven major boats, two of which have not yet been launched.

Greenpeace is a multi-national marine company which uses its profits for protest. It is conventionally structured, hierarchical and equipped to make fast decisions. It never seems to have been hampered by notions of democracy, unlike its great competitor, Friends of the Earth. Its local groups (180 in the UK) raise cash but have no say in running the campaigns. Its 40-strong international HQ is in Lewes, Sussex, and its ruling five-person board is chaired by the South Pacific veteran, David McTaggart.

By any standards, it is an impressive operation. By focusing exclusively on selected areas under just four environmental headings—wildlife (whales, seals and dolphins), air pollution (acid rain and the ozone layer), water pollution (toxic wastes and the North Sea) and nuclear issues (weapon tests, radioactive sea discharges and making the seas nuclear-free)—it has managed to target its limited resources effectively. It can claim at least some credit for stopping atmospheric nuclear testing, commercial whaling, the importation of live dolphins into the UK and nuclear waste dumping at sea.

*'Sooner or later someone else is going to get killed during an action. We'll have to know exactly why we did it'*

Success, of course, has brought its problems. There was an internal bust-up in 1985 over the impact its campaign against the fur trade was having on the indigenous peoples of Canada, Alaska and Greenland. A row between Greenpeace International and Greenpeace UK ended with many of the key UK staff being replaced in a bloodless coup.

More recently, the departure of Greenpeace's anti-nuclear campaigner George Pritchard to work as a consultant for a nuclear waste company (from which he has since resigned) did not attract a favourable press. The *Independent*'s environment correspondent, Richard North, has attacked the organisation for being economical with the truth, as has the House of Commons Select Committee on the Environment (albeit wrongly).

The irony is that over the last few years Greenpeace has been making genuine efforts to beef up its scientific credibility. It has devoted more resources to research, to report-writing and to conventional lobbying techniques. It has also sharpened up its advertising and begun direct mail shots. These changes have in turn annoyed some of the direct action traditionalists, who fear loss of purity and effectiveness.

The old debate between the principled and the pragmatic is constantly rerun. On the one hand it is argued that Greenpeace's task is to bear witness, not just be to provide images, but forcibly to stop environmental crimes. "I'm afraid that it might lose the spirit born of outrage that spawned it," said one old hand last week.

Others stress the importance of getting all the facts right, influencing opinion by education and symbolism. They argue that direct action should only take place when the ground has been well-prepared and public support can be expected. "Sooner or later," said one prominent member of staff, "someone else is going to get killed during an action. We'll have to know exactly why we did it."

The argument has no easy resolution. It would certainly be sad if Greenpeace became little more than an ordinary pressure group and used its boats simply for symbolic protests. Equally it cannot aim randomly at any target: it has to choose where best to act.

It does risk direct action overkill (ten anti-nuclear weapons actions in Europe over the last five months alone). Greenpeace activists getting arrested erecting banners in strange places no longer tends to make the TV news. The ever-fickle media is getting bored. This presents both a problem and a challenge.

The threats to the environment are increasing. The need for courageous, crusading, extremist campaigns is greater than ever. Of course in-depth research and traditional lobbying have their place and bring progress. But exciting, daring action can capture the public imagination and win public support like no other tactic. Uncompromising demands can force decision-makers to compromise.

It was an element of madness in 1971 that made a small group of Americans and Canadians charter a vessel to take them into the proposed US testing area around the island of Amchitka in the Aleutians. They stopped the tests and subsequently set up Greenpeace. It was an element of madness that made David McTaggart sail towards Moruroa atoll in 1972 and 1973. There was a touch of madness in Greenpeace's manoeuvres around Rosyth and the US naval base on the Holy Loch this month. But if the day ever comes when Greenpeace reverts to sanity, it should be a day of mourning. ●



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GREENPEACE

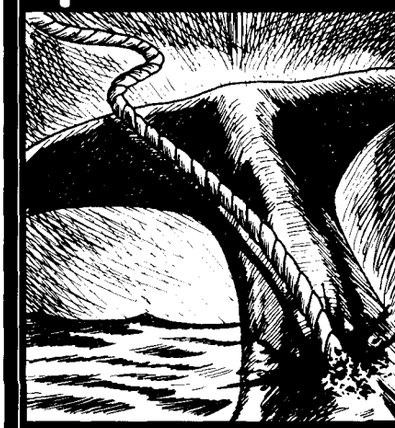
## NUCLEAR POWER

The possibility of future nuclear accidents is real.
The probability is high.
A core meltdown accident possibly resulting in Chernobyl scale releases of radiation can be expected within 20 years according to former US Nuclear Regulatory Commissioner Asselstine.

Greenpeace has raised fundamental questions on the safety of UK gas-cooled reactors and is campaigning for their closure.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

GREENPEACE



## THE GREAT WHALES

Since commercial whaling was banned in 1986, 11,000 whales have been slaughtered, many for so-called scientific research.

Iceland was the first whaling nation to side-step the commercial whaling ban. To make Iceland pay dearly for the whales she kills, Greenpeace is promoting a boycott of Icelandic fish. Meanwhile Greenpeace will work for a permanent ban on commercial whaling.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

GREENPEACE

## NON-VIOLENCE

In 17 years of campaigning, Greenpeace's greatest achievement has been its refusal to resort to violence. Ever.

At least as important as opposing nuclear weapons, saving whales or trying to stop ocean pollution, is the way it has been done.

To Greenpeace, the peace is as important as the green; the means is as important as the end.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

GREENPEACE

## NUCLEAR FREE SEAS

A nuclear war is most likely to break out at sea.
Naval nuclear arms have proliferated unchecked, while land based weapons have been the focus of arms negotiations.

To head off the naval nuclear arms race and alert the world to the dangerous war-fighting strategies adopted by the nuclear navies Greenpeace is promoting its Nuclear Free Seas campaign.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

GREENPEACE

## LOST DOLPHINS

Britain has lost many of her coastal dolphins and porpoises. Pollution, over-fishing and incidental catches are most likely to blame.

To stem the decline and protect existing stocks, Greenpeace has set up its Dolphin Look-Out network and is working to establish protection zones in areas where dolphins and porpoises are still to be found.

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GREENPEACE

## ACID RAIN

Acid rain causes death and damage to forests, lakes, wildlife, crops, buildings and ourselves.

Now scientists have calculated the reductions in acid-forming pollutants that must be made.

They are: 90% cuts in sulphur dioxide
75% cuts in nitrogen oxides
75% cuts in atmospheric ozone.

These are the cuts nature demands if it is to survive.
They are the only cuts which Greenpeace will accept.

THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

# THANK GOD SOMEONE'S MAKING WAVES

# GREENPEACE

GREENPEACE URGENTLY NEEDS YOUR SUPPORT.

Please send a personal donation of £12 or a family donation of £17.50. Or more. In return you will receive our quarterly newsletter and campaign updates. Remember, the more you can afford to send us, the more we can do to protect the natural world.

Please accept my donation of: ☐ £12 Single ☐ £17.50 Family ☐ Additional donation £____

☐ I enclose cheque/P.O. for £_____ payable to Greenpeace Ltd.

☐ Please charge my Visa/Access a/c no: ☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐☐

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Name: Mr/Mrs/Ms _____

Address: _____

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_____ NST 7

_____ Postcode: _____

Please return to: Greenpeace, FREEPOST, 30-31 Islington Green, London N1 8BR.



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# Moving where the money is

*British Rail wants to transform itself into an upmarket business and leisure enterprise—but old habits die hard. Peter Chippendale and Chris Horrie were taken for a ride*

One of the hoariest stand-bys of any newspaper has always been a knocking story about British Rail, an organisation which, true to form, now steadfastly refuses to fit into the privatisation blueprint and catapult itself into the new age of enterprise Britain. Despite endless suggestions, proposals and initiatives, the railways remain rooted in the past, seemingly incapable of being moulded into the new format, a permanent reminder of the old Britain, still continuously providing material for an endless stream of cheap jokes.

Last week's press trip to publicise the six new Pullman services introduced this summer by InterCity proved no exception. Our journey from London to Bath, on the West Country Pullman, was to be the most exciting of all—the fastest scheduled service in the country, covering the 106 miles in 62 minutes at an average speed of just under 102mph. The journey started promisingly. On platform one at Paddington we walked past a long row of flower displays in wrought iron containers to be greeted by our smiling hosts. We were each handed a red carnation and ushered into the interior of tasteful, post-modernist pinks and greys which is replacing the garish orange and blue of the populist old days of rail travel.

The train moved out precisely on time at 9.50, accelerating smoothly and steadily through West London as we prepared to burst out into the booming Thames valley and streak along the M4 corridor—the latest manifestation of Britain's economic revival. But instead of seamlessly sliding us into this prosperous world, the journey turned into a bizarre mixture of conflicting images as we veered wildly between the new and old faces of Britain. Disaster struck before we had even cleared the outskirts of London. Near Southall the train suddenly slowed abruptly, hesitated and then ground to a halt. Suddenly we were plunged back into the bad old world. Marooned, we sat staring at a rust-smeared gasometer and a line of equally rusty old goods wagons. The jolly chatter in the carriage died away and the man from InterCity fingered his collar nervously as more than five minutes ticked past. The intercom system, our only lifeline to information, remained obstinately silent. We set off again at a snail's pace, and crept through West Drayon so slowly it was tempting to jump out onto the platform. At Swindon we actually made an unscheduled stop in the station, already eight minutes later than our scheduled arrival time at our destination—still over 25 miles away.

From then on things improved. The stations started flicking past so quickly we could not read the names on the platform signs. New post-modernist factories jostled with efficient agribusiness. The landscape was speckled with perfectly restored country cottages and imposing country houses. Rows of expensive cruisers lined the banks of the Thames, seeming to encapsule the Thatcherite dream as we sped past a fellow achiever on a nearby road in his white, colour-coded Escort XR3i RS Turbo.

But the situation was beyond retrieval. We were more than half an hour late into Bath, and the party missed the second event on the schedule, the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the reopening of a section of the city's Roman Baths by Tourism Minister John Lee. Instead the ceremony went ahead without us, observed only by the local press, before we arrived for event three—the Minister donning silver laurels handed to him by a "soothsayer" in a silly publicity stunt archly described as a "photo-opportunity". His young daughter, who had come along with his wife for the trip, accurately described her father as "looking like a Wally".

In the old days, as the hacks piled into the elegant surroundings of the immaculately restored Georgian pump room for welcoming drinks and lunch, the sequence of events would have aroused huge merriment. Typical cock-up. More red faces at British Rail. Smiles all round at the newsdesk, readers delighted that deep-rooted prejudice against rail travel had been confirmed once again. But today's delay, it was explained, had been caused by a line examination, a humiliating process in this modern age brought about by a report of an obstacle on the line. This can only be dealt with by the old-fashioned process of the driver ringing up to find out what is supposed to be wrong and then proceeding slowly, trying to find it by looking out of the window. As is so often the case, the report had proved to be a false alarm. But the damage had still been done. But instead of the usual derision, the press attitude on this occasion was strangely muted, supportive and understanding. A mixture of embarrassment and sympathy greeted the auto-destruction of yet another British enterprise initiative.

The attitude was hard luck—and definitely not InterCity's fault. In the old days you could have blamed British Rail as an organisation. But because InterCity does not control the track there was nothing it could do about it. It, too, had become a victim of the tyranny of the rails. The latest state of play on the railways is that British Rail has been shunted into a simulated private sector until the muddle over its future is sorted out. Operations have been divided into five different sectors, each charged with making a profit in their own right and adding the new word "sectorisation" to the mutating vocabulary of business-speak which surrounds the new or re-organised industries. For InterCity, now effectively operating as an independent company, this has meant an abrupt withdrawal of government subsidies which covered losses of £86 million in the last financial year, and the introduction of a dynamic new attitude to the business of transporting people about.

A corporate affairs executive explained the position as we sipped our drinks and murmured sympathy over the discrete strains of the pump room's resident trio. The new obligation to "get on with it" has meant a new attitude. InterCity is aggressively moving where the money is—at the top end of the business and leisure markets. "We are no longer a common carrier," he explained. "We no longer have a social obligation to be all things to all men. Our aim is to provide a quality product that people will pay for. It's horses for courses. If people want to go from London to Bath for £8 they can get the bus."

In line with this, the new Pullmans are the spearhead of a drive to expand away from the bad old days of Blue Savers, and people travelling on special offers cut off the back of washing powder packets. The purpose of the new Pullman journeys is not so much going anywhere, as experiencing the journey for its own sake by taking part in an unashamedly elitist "leisure experience". The targets are rich foreign tourists on the one hand and the achievers of modern Britain on the other.

The tasteful pastel-illustrated "Pullman Experience" brochure lays down the pitch which is being given to Britain's companies. The offer is "the ultimate experience in travelling for pleasure", a "glittering prize" for the modern businessman and woman—"a way to revitalise a tired but winning sales force...a better incentive to work hard, a motivation for conference delegates".

Put in plainer language the deal is an upmarket version of a soap-packet offer. Any group-booking of more than six places (which tourists can make in their own countries before they arrive) qualifies for large discounts. The individual return fare to Bath is £47, but if six are travelling they can have a gourmet meal with champagne thrown in and still only pay £46—providing there is still such a thing as a free lunch. The fares get cheaper as the meals get smaller, right down to £26 return if you settle for coffee and pastries.

In these kinds of circumstances, a half hour



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Clare Jarrett

delay can be seen as a positive advantage, postponing that moment when you have to get off and join in with everybody else. As the brochure drippingly points out: "When the train finally glides to a halt, you may suffer a jolt (sic) at the thought of getting off. After the Pullman Experience re-entry to the real world can be mildly traumatic."

But fortunately, as it also emphasises, the destinations that have been chosen "will help you to recover". They, like the Pullman, are not part of the real world, but—with the exception of Liverpool—the jewels in the crown of tourist industry—Stratford-upon-Avon, Oxford, Chester, the Peak District and the West Country. It is here than you can indulge in the two other aspects of the Pullman Experience, sampling Heritage and indulging in "speciality shopping", the new marketing speak for spending money in expensive shops.

In Bath, the most popular of the destinations, a five-minute level walk from the station will take you to the Roman Baths for the mandatory tour, and without strolling more than a few hundred yards you can spend your money in one of the dozens of exclusive shops, like the Pullman staff, just waiting to serve you.

As the brochure puts it: "That's Pullman. A very simple principle, a rewarding business practice." How rewarding it will prove to be for InterCity is yet to be seen. This year the concentration is on "selling in" to the market and getting into travel brochures in preparation for a full season between April and September next year. Bath will have done its bit by opening even more "speciality shops" like Alexon, Bolero, Addition Elle, Cellini, Penhaligans and Janet Reager in the newly restored colonnades. At the moment caution is the watchword, but InterCity, borrowing their parent organisation's former slogan, can confidently say, "We're getting there". ●



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POLITICAL COLUMN

# Tunnel versions

*How many politicians these days pass the bookshelf test?*

*Stephen Howe*

The best of the many reasons for loving Michael Foot, utterly disastrous though he was as a party leader, was the breadth and generosity of his literary passions. I could not, I think, go quite so far as to place Margaret Thatcher's philistinism first among the charges against her. She is too awful in too many severely practical ways for that. Yet the complete absence, in all her recorded statements, of any suggestion that her imagination has ever been stirred by anything outside politics, says more about why she has been a disaster for the country even than the oft-noted icy void that lies where her sense of humour should be. No one whose range of cultural reference seems to stretch only from a fund of misinterpreted Sunday School stories to a few misquotations of Kipling could possibly be trusted, let alone liked. No one who loves Hazlitt or Swift or Byron as much as does Foot, or who like him can appreciate Disraeli's novels despite their politics, could be a bad thing.

It is obviously Thatcher who is the more typical politician in this respect, whilst Foot's bookishness was widely felt to make him some sort of political dinosaur. He was constantly mocked for it; it was even obscurely suggested that this trait somehow in itself unfitted him for high office. Certainly none of our present party leaders has laid themselves open to that kind of charge. When he first stood as Labour leader, Neil Kinnock named Idris Davies as his favourite poet—some newspaper had asked all the candidates about their tastes. I thought it a lovely choice, though I fear it owed rather a lot to purely local loyalties. Subsequently, Kinnock has dropped very few further hints about what moves or inspires him: though it's still evident that his passions are titanic and his tastes catholic by comparison with the Prime Minister's.

Roy Hattersley's literary interests are, of course, much advertised; but it is sadly revealing that they are so often held against him, not least by many Labour activists, and that he feels he has at times to make a self-deprecating joke of them. Tony Benn shows occasional signs, though less often than he once did, that he actually reads for pleasure; whilst Eric Heffer is something of an autodidact scholar—with, as Hazlitt once said of William Cobbett, all the limitations as well as the strengths which that implies.

Turning back to the Tories, what can one say of a party whose major literary eminence is Jeffrey Archer? There is, it is true, a scattering of other popular novelists on both sides of the House, the best-known being Douglas Hurd and Chris Mullin; though it's rather boringly predictable that they almost all write political thrillers, and none of them is as good at it as fifties Labour backbencher Maurice Edelman. The greyer or balder heads of British politics include some historians of repute, like Lord Roy Jenkins and Robert Rhodes James. Overall, though, it is a pretty bleak scene.

No reporter, so far as I can discover, has even thought to ask the SLD leadership contenders about their literary or artistic loves, nor have they volunteered such information. We have learnt much about their pets, gardens and—with the inimitable discreet sexism of the British quality press—the appearance of their wives; but if their views of the world and of the future are shaped by anything wider or deeper than their own political experience, we have yet to hear it. That, I feel sure, is a major reason why I have found the choice between Ashdown and Leith such an utterly uninteresting one. Ten minutes scanning Paddy Ashdown's personal bookshelves would tell one much more of real importance about what kind of leader he will be than as many hours of ploughing through the clipped, ad-speak prose of his press releases.

*What can one say of a party whose major literary eminence is Jeffrey Archer?*

There will no doubt be readers who will find in this attitude evidence of hopeless dilettantism on my part. Journals of the left which try to take culture seriously, both in its own right and in its interconnections with the political, have always faced responses of this kind. George Orwell, in his *Tribune* days, used to have much gentle fun with the kind of reader who would write in to say (as one did) that: "As a Socialist, my aim in life is to destroy Toryism. For this purpose I require all the ammunition I can get, and I look to *Tribune* as the main source of supply." Book reviews and arts coverage, such correspondents complained, were not very useful missiles in the holy war. Orwell's response was twofold: "Even the most unpolitical book, even an outright reactionary book, can be of use to the socialist movement if it provides reliable information or forces people to think. But we also assume that books are not to be regarded simply as propaganda, that literature exists in its own right."

A rather more thoughtful riposte to the kind of claim I'm making is to say that an emphasis on traditional "high" literary culture, and judgments on politicians in terms of their responsiveness to it, is fundamentally elitist. It ignores or is contemptuous both of popular cultural forms which have far wider constituencies, and of CP Snow's second culture of science and technology. If politicians who are too deeply wedded to the first culture's assumptions now feel constrained to conceal the fact, that is a kind of victory for democracy. True enough, in a very limited sense.

It would be splendid if more and more MPs were showing deep scientific knowledge: as opposed to merely acquiring or pretending an interest in the short-run economic results of scientific inquiry. For a start, such a major parliamentary lobby for the concerns of scientific research would massively strengthen opposition to the present mutilation of our universities. And what fun it would be if the languages of popular culture were more strongly represented in politics. I like the idea of sixties-generation, ex-hippy MPs (and the ghosts of beads and incense must lurk behind some of the massed suits) coming clean about their secret, lingering passions for the *Incredible String Band*; or of those still younger prefacing speeches with "Mr Speaker, Honourable Members; In the words of Joe Strummer..."

None of this happens. The decline of a literary culture in political life has not led to its being informed by a more generously-defined cultural awareness. It has left a spreading cultural desert, in which politics speaks the language of the advertising agency, of the management consultancy, of the lean solicitor, at worst of the *Sun* editorial. Those who have no other languages at their command, who seem inspired by nothing else—and here Mrs Thatcher is both the worst offender and the leading sign of the times—come over as somehow less than fully human. They scare me.



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# WOMEN WORKING

## Prog 1. THE MAIDS

In 30s Britain the only work open to most women was as maid servants. For the Marquess of Anglesey growing up surrounded by servants was 'natural', for the women who served there was no choice.
*Wednesday 3rd August at 6.30pm*

## Prog 2. MOTHERS RUIN

Women with children have hard choices when it comes to work. A night nurse with two children only sleeps when her baby sleeps. A group of computer programmers look after each others children while they work. Nothing will change until men change.
*Wednesday 10th August at 6.30pm*

## Prog 3. UNION MADE

As trade union membership falls dramatically the unions realise for the first time in their history that they need women members. But women in the unions have sometimes found they have to fight their brothers as well as the employer.
*Wednesday 17th August at 6.30pm*

## Prog 4. A WOMAN'S TOUCH

In South Wales it is said that by the end of the century more women than men will be working. Women work in the electronics industry doing low paid jobs men would find boring. Meanwhile their husbands stay at home and look after the baby.
*Wednesday 24th August at 6.30pm*

4
CHANNEL FOUR TELEVISION

**Produced and directed by Claire Pollak ○ Booklet by Ursula Huws ○ A Cinecontact Production for Channel 4**



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# LETTERS

## Stuart Bell on Cleveland

The facts in the Cleveland child abuse crisis are impossible to dispute. In all, 121 children were taken from their parents; 98 were returned; and there were eight prosecutions, seven arising from a diagnosis by Dr Marietta Higgs, one by Dr Geoffrey Wyatt. Of these eight cases, two men hanged themselves in Durham gaol, and of the remaining six only two had anything to do with reflex anal dilatation. Those two were withdrawn.

Four criminal prosecutions out of 121 cases reflects the tragic balance sheet of Cleveland. It is hardly taken into account by Beatrix Campbell in her review of my book ("Witch-hunting in Cleveland", 15 July). She mentions one case of a father who was not prosecuted but who nevertheless lost his children in the civil courts—the *only* father to do so. She said that I do not mention this in my book. In fact, on page 310 I state quite clearly that the father lost his children. It is not for me to challenge the verdicts of the courts, but I would wish that Cleveland county council, among others, would accept the decisions of the courts in the 98 cases where they got it wrong.

Two men (not one) hanged themselves—an uncle named by the children when the perpetrator had actually been the stepfather (who pleaded guilty). The second was a former soldier who had not seen his children alone for a year, because he was living apart from them. One of his children by his separated wife was taken to hospital, following a playground accident, and was diagnosed as having been anally abused, with the reflex dilatation test as the only evidence against the father.

The test has been discredited by no less a body than the DHSS Standing Medical Advisory Committee in a national report to doctors which states that there is no proof that it is, or is not, pathognomic of child sexual abuse; that when elicited, *it should raise the level of suspicion; but that it cannot be emphasised too strongly that no physical sign can be regarded as being uniquely diagnostic of child sexual abuse* (the committee's italics).

As for the children's statements in Cleveland, the disclosure work on the children consisted of threats, pressures and leading questions, all of which are fully documented in my book. Counsel advised Cleveland county council such statements could not, under any circumstances, be presented as evidence. This shameful treatment of young children—some of whom endured 13 disclosure sessions in which they consistently denied they had been abused—is a gross abuse of the liberties of children in the care of the state. Children of "sunny dispositions" were weeks later described as "seriously disturbed".

Beatrix Campbell selects bits of evidence from a final report of some 350 pages. But it might be as well to remember that Lord Butler Sloss severely criticised the consultant paediatricians and their future is now under review. Criticisms were also levelled at the county council, described by Butler Sloss as "authoritarian". A social worker served a place of safety order on a new born baby, while the mother was awaiting stitches in hospital. Criticisms were levelled at both senior and middle management, including Mrs Sue Richardson and the director of social services, Mike Bishop.

Campbell says that the court judgments were beginning to turn in the council's favour. There has been only one such judgment. Set against that the harsh comments of Judge Myrella Cohen about a reflex anal dilatation test carried out on a baby suffering in hospital from a brain deformity, or by Judge Hall on a similar test made on a child who had an accident in her home. Mr Justice Eastham overturned the findings of three consultant paediatricians, all of them made on the basis of the test, and declared that the three children in that case had not been sexually abused by their father, or by anybody else.

In short, the smokescreens thrown up by the likes of Beatrix Campbell will in the end reveal a landscape not of child sexual abuse, but of a new, controversial and now discredited diagnostic technique tried on Cleveland youngsters but overturned by the courts and by a government committee. Cleveland was about the power of doctors in white coats and allies who believed that one in three children were being abused, or that there were some 17,000 Cleveland children being abused within their homes.

As for my own "struggle for survival" in the Labour Party, I was elected with a majority just short of 15,000 at the last election, resigned my frontbench post to take up the cause of those innocent families, and was last year given a vote of confidence by my constituency management committee carried by 66 votes to six. Two weeks ago a motion of thanks was carried unanimously by the same committee.

*Stuart Bell MP*
*House of Commons*

## Is Black opposite of White?

I read with amusement the article about Asians in Britain disliking being called black and being condemned by "liberal" blacks and browns ("New black power lines", 15 July). I heard some Asian leader stating, "If I am not white, then I am black". Such solidarity with the so-called black movement is enthralling, but meaningless. In logic the opposite of white is non-white. Could we not simply decide to speak of non-whites when talking of Afro-Caribbeans and Asians?

*Fazlul Alam*
*Birmingham University*

## Debt repudiation

Susan George argues that the heavily indebted third world countries should not adopt debt repudiation as a strategy ("Getting your own back", 15 July). She says that the repudiation is not only morally wrong, but would also be counter-productive, in that it would turn the debtors into financial pariahs.

Many in the third world would disagree. They believe that their huge debt has become a mechanism of political and economic domination by the industrialised countries.

The scale of the exploitation is particularly clear in the Latin American case. According to official figures, which we publish in our recent book, (*The Debt Squads—the US, the Banks and Latin America*), Latin America borrowed $273 billion between 1976 and 1981. But most of this was either sent back to the banks in debt-servicing ($193 billion) or squandered in capital flight ($57 billion). Only 8 per cent—$23 billion—of the total was brought into the continent, to be used (or not) for development purposes. Yet it was this tiny transfer of real resources that caught the whole continent in the devastating debt trap.

When the debt crisis exploded in 1982, Latin America was subjected to the most violent recession in its history to squeeze out as much interest as possible. As a result, it has, at frightening social cost, made a net transfer to the banks of about $180 billion over the last six years.

But this meets only half of the hugely inflated interest bill. The other half has been met by fresh loans from the banks; the debt stands today at about $420 billion, bearing no relation whatever to Latin America's capacity to pay, and entering the realms of fiction. Because no more dollars can be squeezed out, (fictional) debt papers are now being exchanged, via debt-equity swaps, for (real) assets.

Radical measures, like debt repudiation, are needed for Latin America to break out of the trap, but they will not by themselves be enough. Contrary to popular belief, Latin America has been making net capital transfers to the west for most of this century, albeit on a fairly modest scale.

If the third world debt crisis is indeed the third world war, as Susan George claims, then it must be fought as such, not with the conciliatory "3–d solution" she proposes.

*Sue Branford*
*London SW2*



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# LETTERS

## This England

While this entire household is delighted that our favourite feature, This England, has not only *not* been dropped in the new format but actually lengthened and promoted up the batting order, we are nonetheless disturbed by what appears to be a new policy of allowing old hands two bites at the cherry (or 3 book tokens). On 8 July the stalwart George Moor had two entries published and this week (15 July) another long-term This Englander has also made it twice, in the person of James Scott.

Mr Weir—THIS IS NOT FAIR. I know they're jolly good at spotting a good entry but what about the rest of us who have tried hard to be included in the column?

My butler and I have a ten-year-long rivalry to get one of our entries accepted. You realise it is not for the money but for the honour and the glory. I even contribute to the newspaper bill below stairs so that between us we can monitor a wide range of newsprint. Come on, sir, play fair.

*(Lady) Amanda Skeffington-Barr*
*Castle Fosse, Inverness*

## Penal discrepancies

Yasmin Alibhai's comprehensive and persuasive critique of racism in the criminal justice system ("Criminal injustice: How the legal system treats blacks", 8 July) raises another issue: the absence of objective data prevents firm conclusions from being made about them and how much discrimination is taking place.

The police, the courts, the probation service and the prison service must monitor their activities on an ethnic basis. The procedure must be regular and systematic. Moreover the results of ethnic monitoring should then be evaluated to determine whether any irregular patterns emerge. I should emphasise that the lack of uniformity does not itself indicate discrimination; but unless the differences can be explained in non racial grounds then racial discrimination must be assumed.

The notable exception is the prison service which is now implementing a refreshingly purposeful approach to race issues, from which other criminal justice agencies could usefully learn. For many in the criminal justice system these notions appear at least irrelevant and probably threatening. Yet the Commission for Racial Equality asks no more of the legal system than it asks of other institutions. Put simply, confidence in the judicial system depends upon an impartial enforcement of the law. If it is seen to be treating one group less favourably than another, then it will bring all law into disrepute.

Black people comprise 2 per cent of the general population and 14 per cent of the prison population. The question to be addressed in practical terms is not why they came to be incarcerated but how the criminal justice system produced the discrepancy.

*Navnit Dholakia*
*Commission for Racial Equality*

## "Diagnosing" abuse

It would be a great shame if any readers (exhausted by the constant attention paid by the media to child sexual abuse) skipped the pieces in the *NSS* special issue on Cleveland. The care taken to communicate coherently was evident. It was therefore sad to see the myth being perpetuated that "child sexual abuse" is a diagnosis. Rape and assault are never described as diagnoses, so why is CSA?

Like social workers, psychologists, health visitors and the rest, a paediatrician or police surgeon's job with respect to suspected CSA, rape and physical abuse is to gather evidence, not make a diagnosis. An opinion may be offered as to the likely cause of any abnormality detected. This must be evaluated in conjunction with the social and psychological evidence and opinions, and ultimately tested in the courtroom.

The term "diagnosis" suggests the end rather than the beginning of an assessment and also can give a reassuring, but entirely false, sense of certainty. Not only can medical conditions closely mimic the physical sequelae of abuse, but only a minority of abused children display any physical signs at all. It is even more rare for medical evidence to link the abuse with a particular perpetrator.

We were also unhappy with Mary Macleod and Esther Saraga's critique of "systems theory" and its practitioners. The distorted views they describe can and do occur, but in our experience they are not implicit in a family oriented approach.

On a more positive note, Susannah Chochrane's article was a professional and personal masterpiece, distilling so many of the emotions and so much of the confusion and pain felt by mothers into something which made sense. By sharing rather than attempting to explain, it is likely that she has provided real help to other women faced by the same ordeal.

*David Glasgow*
*Nadine Eisenberg*
*(Clinical Psychologists)*

## Remanding Parkinson

Geoffrey Parkinson (15 July) criticises NACRO's recent briefing paper *Remands in Custody—Some Facts and Figures*, which points out that 40 per cent of defendants remanded in custody are later acquitted or given non-custodial sentences.

His main serious point is that, when sentencing people who have been remanded in custody, courts sometimes take this into account and impose a non-custodial sentence. This is true and well known to everyone working with offenders. It does not, however, alter the fact that far too many people charged with non-violent offences are unnecessarily refused bail.

This has clearly been shown by the experimental bail information schemes which have recently been set up in eight areas by the probation service. These have reduced the number of custodial remands with no increase in the rate of abuse of bail.

Unlike Mr Parkinson's article, NACRO's briefing paper draws attention to this probation service initiative, which is the most important and effective current move towards reducing remands in custody. It is just one of many successful probation service schemes, the case for which NACRO constantly argues.

*Vivian Stern,*
*Director, NACRO*

## Unblocking Labour

Stephen Howe ("Unblocking Labour", 24 June) on the unions' block vote in the Labour Party is quite right—it must go. I would suggest the party should go further and open conference policy making to a direct vote of individual members.

The unions, the NEC, the PLP, the shadow cabinet, and the leader all take upon themselves a privileged role in policy making, whether through the constitution or by tacit agreement. Why not turn the process on its head? Instead of a veto from the top let us have a veto from the bottom: a conference in which all delegate voting is abolished, delegates would only be involved in composite resolutions, and the final voting is thrown back on the membership by postal ballot.

It is not just the block vote and the upper layers of the party that are undemocratic, the party is shot through with weak democracy.

*Alan Farleigh*
*Brighton*

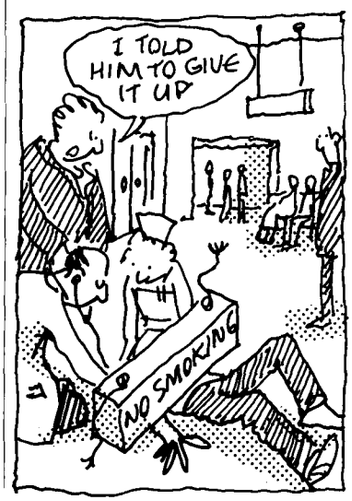
## Cigarette fascists?

I was deeply offended by Alexander Cockburn's blanket characterisation of those opposed to the smoking of cigarettes as "fascists" (*NSS*, 15 July).

I am sick of walking out of the hospital canteen through the smoking section, (in a hospital which is officially non-smoking, it is often the only section open), so that I reek of that foul smell. I then go to assess someone's leg which must be cut off because they couldn't stop smoking, or to watch a patient struggle with the news that they have bronchial cancer, or that they have had a heart attack.

I am so sick that I find it difficult to express my contempt for an industry which has to recruit one hundred thousand new smokers a year in the UK, because that many die prematurely, and for the erudite apologists who label people like me, whether in this country or the USA, as fascists.

*Mark Porter*
*Leciester Royal Infirmary*



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STATE OF THE NATION

# A party on probation

*John Lloyd*

Changes of leader in either of the two major parties need the debilitating sickness of the leader or the momentum of a just-lost election. Lacking either of these, we shouldn't waste much time on speculation that Neil Kinnock is about to be removed by his colleagues, many of whom mutter darkly about him. I take Ed Pearce's point (*NSS* last week) that for all the trappings of the fancy (and disastrous) electoral college, Kinnock depends on the support of his parliamentarians or he is finished. But he is not likely to *be* finished.

First, none of the possible candidates are likely to run against him. Gordon Brown, Bryan Gould, Roy Hattersley and John Smith will, I would judge, bide their time: in part through loyalty, in part through fear of falling flat, in part from a canny sense that they may not do better.

For if Kinnock is garrulous, short-tempered, arrogant, muddled, sentimental and Welsh, he is also brave, inspirational, determined, generous and witty: if Hattersley is clever, effective, liberal, open-minded and kind, he is also a *bon viveur,* a *gourmet,* an epicure, a *flaneur,*a *boulevardier* and a Yorkshireman: if Gould is strategic, bold, clear, attractive and charming, he is also temperamental, vacillating, inexperienced, rootless and from New Zealand: if Smith is brainy, sharp, direct, well-briefed, keen and Scots, he is also dour, dull, narrow, cautious and schoolmasterly.

In short, any of them are capable of being seen as just right for the job or completely wrong for it: just as Kinnock has been so seen during his tenure of power. Since they all know how the fickle minds of their colleagues can, in alliance with the press, deify or demonise at whim, they are unlikely to be overly impressed by the current campaign against Kinnock. Secondly, they are not a parliamentary island isolated from the broader labour movement. They are naturally affected by the views of the unions which sponsor them and the constituency parties which select them. Only when a tide to get rid of the leader gathers momentum throughout the movement would a parliamentary putsch be contemplated, and it is not. Instead, Kinnock has been asked to listen to his backbenchers: to see them, on a rota basis, over the next twelve months: and for that period, he will be on a kind of probation. If he and the party don't pick up, he *will* be in trouble.

Third, and most importantly, the modernisation of policies and the party has been commanded by Kinnock and no-one else, except perhaps Bryan Gould, has poked themselves out from behind the rock as far as the leader has. That is, of course, what he is paid for: but there are issues to be tackled which should engage the more public energies of his senior colleagues, and only in doing so will they merit real consideration as alternative leaders.

Economic policy is the most advanced. The economic paper, published this week and ostensibly written by Alan Tuffin, of the Union of Communications Workers, sees the most fully-fledged expression of revisionism in this sphere yet to emerge. It explicitly and enthusiastically endorses a Swedish model, which separates off private capital from the state and confines the state's activity to providing welfare, ensuring a high level of education and skill, keeping employment full and wages high.

Alan Tuffin did not write this. But he clearly agrees with much of it and has been brave enough to speak to the line at party and TUC conferences. The hand of Bryan Gould is clear enough upon it: it would have been better had his name been on it too, for then we would have known where we were. For all that, we know this: Labour's leadership wants to run an efficient market economy with shallower social divisions. If it achieves that, it will be very successful. Time for the soft left, the party's new ruling class, to preach the message loudly.

*In the battle between the phantoms and loonies, I am for the loonies*

The party's constitution is an increasing burden upon it. The Trade Union Act's ballots, the grudging reforms within the Labour Party in the direction of one member, one vote, the Gordon Brown plan, now party policy, to bring union levy-payers into full membership at a low fee, all point to taking the ageing bull by the horns and throwing it to the ground. A radical, modernising party cannot at the core of its policy-making process have a phantom army of trade union votes to block constituency loonies.

The system has passed beyond its period of quiet effectiveness and has not attained the status of a likeable eccentricity. It is simply a block on thought, action and party renewal. In the matter of phantoms v loonies, I am for the loonies, in the liberal-minded hope that once given effective power, they will use it more wisely; that they will be augmented by non-loonies from the unions; and that the party will not be silly enough to do other than insist that all matters of substance are decided by a vote of all members.

If Kinnock isn't going to sort out a defence policy—and there are understandable reasons why he won't—others have to. It can't be done as Joseph Nicolas, who wrote a letter to the *NSS* last week in response to an earlier piece of mine suggests, by fudging unilateralism and multilateralism. With due deference to my colleague Ben Pimlott, I think he's wrong here too. Or rather, his GRIT formula (*NS* 3 June)—GRIT for graduated and reciprocated reductions intention—*is* multilateralism. To say that Gorbachev made a unilateralist move in banning tests for 18 months is to do violence to language. Gorbachev has made a move in order to achieve a response; and when, in this case, he didn't get the response, he cancelled the move. It was a small and acceptable risk (though reportedly opposed by many in his military): it was wholly within a multilateral framework.

Unilateralism is the position which would cancel all British nuclear weaponry on the perfectly good grounds that since we can never use it without self-destruction, why keep it? I think this is wrong but wholly understandable: the anguish comes from trying to make it consonant with multilateralism, which is philosophically quite separate. If, as they say privately, a very large proportion of Labour's parliamentary party believes multilateralism must now be Labour's defence posture, then it must be argued for by those now in power—rather than by those who have (wrongly) lost power, like Peter Shore.

Finally, the new party ruling class has to take seriously the process of forming ideas and making them policy. The tendency is to neglect intellectual work—in complete contrast to the open espousal of new right thinking by Mrs Thatcher, Sir Keith (now Lord) Joseph and others in the mid-1970s Tory party.

The next twelve months is not just a period of probation for Kinnock alone. It is one for the party and for its leading members. If they do not unchain their minds and their mouths, they will bear as heavy a responsibility as the leader.



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# Death of an education authority

*For the next 20 months, the Inner London Education Authority is living on borrowed time. Can it last out till then, asks Caroline St John-Brooks?*

Today (29 July), Kenneth Baker's Education Bill receives Royal Assent. And the death of the Inner London Education Authority becomes official. On 31 March 1990, the ILEA will cease to exist. At midnight, its functions will be handed over to the 13 inner London boroughs.

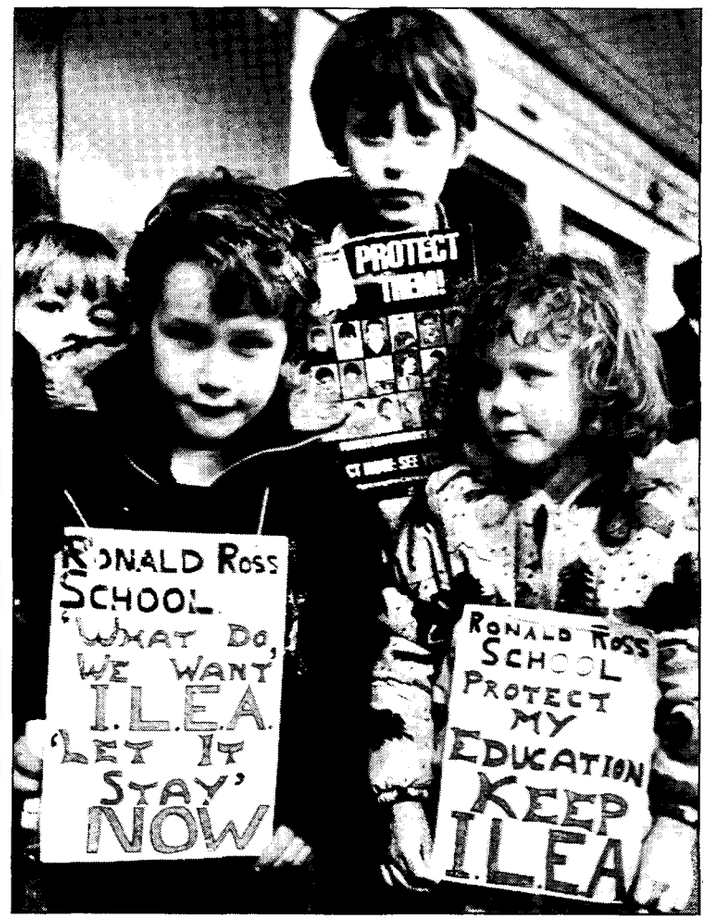
But can it even struggle on until then? "The haemorrhage is beginning already," says one secondary head, who is losing 20 per cent of his teachers at the end of this year and is still eight short for September. "People can see chaos round the corner." Teachers, administrators and professional staff, anxious about their own futures, are abandoning ship.

ILEA's politicians and officers are entering uncharted waters. No one has ever presided over the death of an education authority before—and ILEA is huge. It currently employs 21,000 teachers, 13,000 lecturers, 15,000 administrators and professional staff, and 18,000 manual workers.

What's more, ILEA has suffered a series of government-imposed budget cuts as a result of rate-capping. This year it has had to cut spending by 8 per cent, on top of 10 per cent last year. And Baker has just announced that the authority can only spend £940m in its last year of existence up to April 1990, compared with the £1,021 it expects to spend this year.

Piecing the overall picture together is not easy. No one at the top is going to predict catastrophe, however wrong they think the government's decision has been. When intangibles such as morale are concerned, prophesying disaster can precipitate it unnecessarily, and their job is to keep London's education going and hand it over in good order.

Besides, there is a great deal of loyalty to ILEA. Even those teachers who are getting out have mixed feelings. "I feel quite guilty in a way," says one who is taking voluntary severance. "But I really think it's going to be much harder to teach well once the cuts have started to bite, and in the end I have to think of my career and my family." It's perhaps symptomatic of a system which has been under attack for so long, and now faces two years of instability, that very few of the teachers I spoke to agreed to be named.



Format

What's clear is that the authority has lost one in five of its teachers this year. But at secondary level, at any rate, this does not represent a crisis, and many have in fact been paid to go. ILEA currently has more secondary school teachers than it needs, given the drop in pupil numbers, sharpened as always in the inner city.

Deals made with the teacher unions over the years meant that the authority entered 1986 with an uneven distribution of teachers. Some secondary schools were generously staffed: others were short. At the same time, primary schools, where pupil numbers were rising, were sending pupils home because they had no teachers to teach them.

Under Neil Fletcher, ILEA's Labour leader, the authority set up its TAAN (Teachers Above Authorised Numbers) redeployment scheme, leading to one-day strikes by angry teachers last year. Heads were asked to nominate suitable candidates for redeployment to another school, or for retraining. Teachers have also been encouraged to go under a voluntary severance scheme, taking a lump sum with them. This has turned out to be very popular: the scheme has been oversubscribed—an indicator of low morale.

This year, 1,100 teachers were identified by their heads as being suitable for the scheme. So far, 400 have been matched to posts in other schools; 450 have been offered voluntary severance; and 77 secondary teachers are to be retrained for primary or nursery teaching or to teach English as a second language.

Opinions as to the success of the exercise vary widely. "TAAN is a shambles," says one head. "The volume of the exercise is too great to be handled by the personnel, and the people who have been responsible for running it are on the move themselves." "I think TAAN has been conducted pretty efficiently," says another. "But there is bound to be bitterness and anger attached to such an exercise."

It has all resulted in an increase in movement and instability. One in five teachers are leaving the authority at the end of next year—compared with a normal loss of 14 per cent. But recruitment is still buoyant as young resilient teachers look for inner city experience, and a package of incentives put together last year to attract more primary teachers is working well. There is some anxiety about primary vacancies, but no signs as yet that ILEA will have a shortfall any greater than that experienced by other authorities.

The strongest force for stability in the future is going to be the head-teachers. Their turnover is low—running at only 8 per cent or so—and their morale mostly high—in public anyway. Committed to a stable education for their pupils, they know that their job is to rally the troops. "We've got to be optimistic," says Barbara Bourne, deputy at Stoke Newington school, which will be run



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by Hackney council after abolition. "It's true that there is a sense of premature break up—people feeling they must leave while the going is good. We're losing our librarian and our chief technician, who have taken voluntary severance. But morale isn't low, and never has been."

Morale among heads varies according to how they view their local borough. Conservative Wandsworth, which led the campaign to secede from ILEA, is viewed with suspicion because of its reputation as a cost-cutter. The Wandsworth headteachers voted almost unanimously against the borough's proposals to leave ILEA, before the unholy alliance of Michael Heseltine and Norman Tebbit bounced the government into abolishing ILEA entirely. (Though the recent appointment of Donald Naismith, the dynamic and tough-minded director of education from Croydon seems to have raised morale. He may not be quite what they had in mind, but at least he is someone with ideas and clout.)

Says one Wandsworth head: "Teachers have come to see ILEA as a generous and caring authority, and they are genuinely concerned about the possibilities of the loss of that care. The pressures of the last few years, with the teachers' dispute and the introduction of GCSE have been monumental, and there are teachers who are going to feel that they simply can't stand one more thing. How many reasons do you have to have to be pissed off?"

But a primary head in Tory-controlled Westminster said: "People used to be sorry for us because we were in Westminster. But now, when the borough's so advanced in its plans and they haven't even started, the boot's on the other foot."

"Our morale is very high," says Colin Yardley, head of Thomas Tallis school in Greenwich, a solid, well-run borough. "I don't have any fears about their intentions, but I am fearful as to whether they will have enough money. People are talking about a 40 per cent reduction. But if the schools, in spite of open enrolment, can maintain a degree of common purpose and friendliness, and unless the government's got any more slings and arrows to chuck at us, we shall survive."

But teachers are not the only staff to be leaving. The white collar workers who run the authority are going too. The rate among senior grades over the last five months has risen to 20 per cent—unusually high at that level. Bill Stubbs, the Chief Education Officer, left in February in an atmosphere of bad feeling, to head the Polytechnic Funding Council. And the Chief Inspector, David Hargreaves, is going to Cambridge University in October. But that decision was made before ILEA's abolition was on the agenda. "Since Stubbs went, and with Hargreaves going, there's been a feeling of a hole at the top," says one head. "The safest place to be is in a school, because all those people in County Hall will lose their jobs."

Already, those who can get jobs outside are being enticed away faster than they can be replaced. Computer staff, finance officers, lawyers, surveyors: all these are eminently desirable, especially with Docklands and the City expanding so fast. And it is hard to recruit replacements, as D Day approaches.

Neil Fletcher is particularly worried about the fate of the education workers in County Hall. Many are still hanging on—but not for much longer. "These are the people in the inspectorate, the support services, the welfare service, the educational psychologist service—everyone at County Hall is worried. If only the Labour boroughs would commit themselves to a ring-fence, whereby they would offer jobs to ILEA staff first, the people wouldn't be so anxious, and they'd be more likely to stay and see things through. I think it's too early to see a clear picture, but if they haven't got their act together by Christmas, then the cracks will begin to show.

"Morale is better than we dared to hope," says David Mallen, ILEA's Chief Education Officer. "But if the boroughs don't give us assurances soon, then people will start to run for cover. Someone asked me the other day what it's like running down a system. But we're not running it down. It's got to be going at full steam when we hand it over. The teachers, of course, will notice when it happens. But the idea is that it shouldn't affect the children at all."

# The disappeared

*Judy Hirst reports on the worsening plight of Britain's least visible ethnic minority—the Latin Americans*

Oscar Zarate

Wearing a badge for Nicaragua is easier than doing something for the besieged Latin American community here at home. That's the view of Mario Marin, a Colombian human rights activist, and co-ordinator of the Migrants Resource Centre in London. Like many Latin Americans, Marin is bitter at the lack of support for his community from local and national politicians. Backing a struggle thousands of miles away is one thing, he says, but what about some solidarity for the 50,000 Latin American exiles living right here in Britain?

It's a well targetted criticism, as more and more evidence comes to light of the appalling conditions that most Latin American migrants live and work under. The majority are concentrated in cleaning and catering jobs, working an average 60-hour week, for around £1.75 per hour, in the big West End hotels and stores. Only 5 per cent of the community live in council homes; most pay extortionate private sector rents or live in tied accommodation. Few speak more than basic English, or know what their rights are. Add to this a huge demand for specialised medical and psychiatric care, and the need for



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substantial public support would seem to be self-evident.

But it appears that a growing number of Latin American community groups have recently been "deprioritised" by funding agencies, and that more cuts are on the way. The Latin American Cultural Centre, which provides training courses, entertainment and therapeutic support for the community throughout London, has recently had its entire grant cut by the London Boroughs Grants Scheme (LBGS)—the body that has taken over the GLC's funding role. CARILA—a long established information and educational resource for Latin Americans—has only narrowly avoided the same fate by winning a temporary six month reprieve. A number of smaller organisations like Comunidad Latinoamericano, the Latin American Children's Project, and Chile Democratico's nursery project—have all lost their LBGS funding over the past year.

According to the Commission for Racial Equality grants officer, Tanya Bronstein, there has been a rapid deterioration in levels of funding to Latin American groups recently. Faced with a nil-growth budget, the LBGS has been looking to make £1 million savings—and has decided that the Latin American community is relatively well-funded compared with some other minority groups. This, says Bronstein, is nonsense: "It only looks that way because for so long Latin Americans got nothing at all, and the need is so great."

This problem of under-funding is also stressed by Mario Marin. Latin American migrants are an invisible community, he says, of little interest to politicians because, as non-Commonwealth citizens, they don't have the right to vote. With few exceptions, local authority support has been "terrible"—and the community is anyway too dispersed to make an impact on any one borough. Nor are Latin Americans eligible for ethnic minority funding provisions under Section 11 of the Local Government Act: the regulations also only apply to "persons of Commonwealth origin".

Given that most other channels for funding are closed to the Latin American community, the recent decisions by the LBGS will hit it disproportionately hard. But according to Vernon Joynson, head of the LBGS Community Division, projects like the Latin American Cultural Centre or CARILA—good though they are—are not considered a priority by the Grants Committee: organisations providing advise and doing welfare work are thought to be in greater need.

Most Latin American community workers are very sceptical about the LBGS's order of priorities. Miguel Mercado, Co-ordinator of the Latin American Cultural Centre, points out that its training courses—which are highly praised by, amongst others, the British Refugee Council—offer an important service to Latin Americans seeking to acquire marketable skills. And many experts agree that the Centre's cultural activities play a vital therapeutic role for exiles from repressive Latin American regimes.

"The emphasis on advice and welfare is just a smokescreen," says Marta Rodriguez, a former chairperson of the Latin America House in Kilburn, and coordinator for CARILA. She resents the pressures being placed on Latin American organisations to conform to the funders' blueprint: groups set up to meet specific needs within the community—like the Latin American Women's Rights Service—have been encouraged to "merge" with the Latin American Advisory Committee. Whole areas of work are being categorised as non-essential, she says, as an excuse for making cuts.

Funding difficulties can only compound the problems currently faced by Latin American community groups. Like other voluntary organisations, they have come to rely heavily on the services of Community Programme (CP) workers, and are worried about the changeover to Employment Training (ET) this September.

However unsatisfactory many groups have found CP, they predict that the new scheme will be worse: both for the individual trainee, in terms of loss of status and income, and for voluntary organisations without the resources to meet the criteria laid down by the new Training Commission. The British Refugee Council, despite its role as an agent for the new scheme, has expressed "grave reservations" about ET. Many Latin American groups have already had their quota of CP places cut, and fear that under the new scheme they could end up with no government funded workers at all.

There is also widespread concern at the increasingly hostile political climate facing the refugee and migrant communities. Ever since the late seventies, there has been a virtual embargo on applications from Latin Americans seeking refugee status. Work permit quotas for service sector jobs also ended around the same time. As a result, more and more Latin American migrants are "unauthorised", their precarious legal position making them highly vulnerable to the whims of the labour market—and the Home Office.

The government's new Immigration Bill is designed to make the removal of overstayers easier, while placing even more restrictions on the rights of dependents to join their relatives here. Meanwhile, groups attempting to organise migrant workers in the workplace report that more and more big employers are "importing" workers from the North of England, Scotland and Northern Ireland to replace the unauthorised foreign service workers they have traditionally relied on.

"This is driving Latin Americans and other migrants even further underground," says David Turnbull, Secretary of the Transport and General Workers' International Branch.

*"Ever since the late seventies, there has been a virtual embargo on applications from Latin Americans seeking refugee status. Work permit quotas for service sector jobs also ended around the same time"*

Competition between different groups of low-paid workers, coupled with the introduction of non-union cleaning contracts into large West End stores, has thwarted the efforts of the Latin American Workers Association and the unions to organise in this sector. So has a shortage of funds.

The LBGS stresses that migrant workers are to be prioritised under the terms of a new "Migrants Working Party" it has set up. But organisations like the Service Workers Action and Advisory Project (SWAAP)—which works closely with the Latin American migrant community—complain that they have lost nearly a third of their LBGS funding over the past two years. The Latin American Workers Assocation gets nothing at all.

"The reality is that even the race relations industry does not seriously acknowledge the existence of groups like Latin Americans," says Tanya Bronstein—let alone central and local government. A recent British Refugee Council document—*Settling for a Future*—has criticised the government for its lack of special provision for refugees: the official response is that it is up to the statutory bodies to provide.

In fact, the only sign of any movement in that direction was a 1985 recommendation by the Home Office Select Committee on Race Relations and Immigration that existing legislation should be extended to cover work with refugees. Three years later, that recommendation is still gathering dust.

The best hope for Latin Americans, according to most community workers, is to campaign for the regularisation of their legal status—including an amnesty for all overstayers. This would allow the community to come out into the open, and reduce its dependency on grant-giving quangos. As the flow of migrants seeking exile from detention and torture continues unabated, Latin Americans in Britain are asking who will fight for their right to stay.


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# A sledgehammer to crack a broken nut

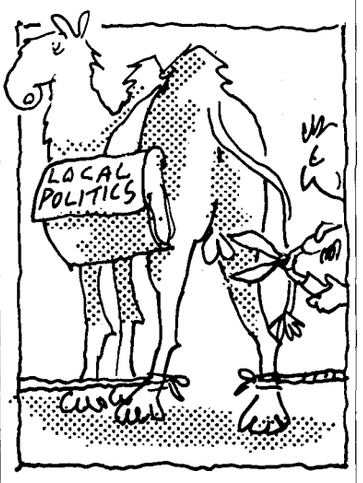
*Christian Wolmar argues that last week's White Paper on local government is incoherent and redundant*

Never before has so much legislation been inspired by such a small group of people. The left-wing councillors who took over a handful of urban authorities between 1978 and 1986 have already prompted a deluge of laws from the three Thatcher administrations, ranging from rate-capping and the abolition of the GLC to Section 28 and two attempts to ban "political publicity". Now we have the fruits of the Widdicombe enquiry into "the conduct of local authority business". Two years after Widdicombe reported, the government last week published a White Paper setting out a framework for yet another local government bill.

The setting-up of the Widdicombe enquiry was prompted by Tory concern that local government was becoming "increasingly politicised" — a concern that could not be translated into action because any tough blanket rules would hurt Tory as well as Labour councils. There are few councils as political and publicity conscious as the London boroughs of Wandsworth and Westminster, two pioneering Tory authorities much praised by the government.

Hence the issue was handled through what used to be the establishment's favourite method: setting up a committee. After sitting on its report for two years, the government has rejected many of its key findings and half-heartedly taken on board the parts that fitted its original intention. The result is a sledgehammer to crack a nut that's already broken, since the left-wing councils are already in retreat because of the pressures of rate-capping.

Recommendations from Widdicombe which have been dropped include giving people who complain to the ombudsmen the right to take their case to court if the ombudsman's decision is not complied with; giving the Audit Commission rather than the local district auditor the power to decide whether councillors should be surcharged; and widening the definition of councillors' pecuniary and non-pecuniary interests when deciding whether they should take part in any particular debate or vote. The latter, particularly, would have




*There are few councils as political and publicity conscious as the London boroughs of Wandsworth and Westminster*

caused embarrassment to many Tory councillors. Nor will there be a statutory chief executive, an idea which was seen by critics as a first step down the road of depoliticising local government entirely.

And many of the recommendations which have been taken on board have been watered down. While Widdicombe recommended that no council staff of principal officer grade (essentially middle and lower management) should be allowed to hold elected office, the government is limiting the ban to chief and deputy chief officers and others covered by the very woolly definition of "those who advise or act on behalf of local authorities". The new law will limit and probably reduce payments for councillors but the level suggested in Widdicombe of £4,000 a year has not been accepted. The government also intends to curb the appointment of political advisers—though it won't be hard to sidestep this since councils are well known for calling spades by other names.

This wishy-washy mish-mash of measures reflects the inherent contradiction of a highly political, centralising government trying to depoliticise local authorities—when it really wants to prevent any left-wing initiatives while allowing right-wing authorities to carry on the good work. The intractable nature of the problem was virtually admitted last month in a publication from the right-wing Centre for Policy Studies (*The Local Right*) which said: "There are dangers in too little politics [in local government] just as there are dangers in too much." Its author: Environment Secretary Nicholas Ridley.

# JTS trainees don't finish their courses

The government's new Employment Training initiative is heading for trouble as soon as it begins in September because few trainees are likely to finish their course.

The long-term aim is to process more than 600,000 unemployed people through ET on similar lines to the two Job Training Schemes which it will replace. The problem is that, according to internal Manpower Services Commission figures, only 6 per cent of trainees finish their training.

It's not that the early leavers are leaving for a job. Only 17 per cent of them leave for work. A further 8 per cent leave for further education.

These figures relate to leavers in March this year and are consistent with figures on JTS-leavers over previous months. But after the March figures were compiled, the MSC decided not to produce any more, even for internal use only.

Initially, the new ET scheme will lean towards Community Programme-style placements, but the aim is to move the emphasis towards a JTS type of programme.

Paul Convery of the Unemployment Unit commented: "These figures should frighten the government, because they mean that as far as industry is concerned, they will not be getting the numbers of trained people they need, and the long-term unemployed are not going to be getting the training they need.

"These people are not leaving in droves just for the sake of it. If they are given proper training in decent conditions, they will stay and make use of it. The problem is that the quality training is just not there. And the unemployed recruits recognise that fact. *Ken Hyder*

# Bad news for hostel-dwellers

When is care not care? Answer: when the government wants to "secure the best value for and proper control of public expenditure".

Last week the DHSS (as it then was) announced draft proposals on hostel charges, based on research it commissioned from the Policy Studies Institute. At the same time, the PSI published its own, different, proposals, based on exactly the same research.

At the moment, people who live in nursing homes, residential care homes and hostels get paid social security differently from normal tenants. Instead of getting income support from the DSS and housing benefit from the local authority housing department, they get a single payment direct from the DSS which *includes* all housing and care costs.

But the government wants to cut DSS spending on care. In March this year, the Griffiths report recommended that local authority social services should fund the care element for people living in residential care and nursing homes, while the DSS should pay a fixed charge towards rent and living expenses as working out the exact rent would be difficult.

What about the hostels? To help make up its mind, the government commissioned the PSI to research how much care hostels actually provide. *All* hostels, said the PSI, provide care, and in some cases—women's refuges and alcohol and drug abuse hostels— they provide a great deal. But the government has chosen to ignore this fact and thinks hostels should be treated like ordinary lodgings—as if they didn't provide care. This will save around £10 million, Richard Berthoud of the PSI.

The PSI has a better idea. Since it's impossible to separate out care and accommodation costs—and housing benefit officers certainly won't be able to do so—basic costs, it says, should include *both* basic care and accommodation, and could be claimed from either HB or the DSS. Housing grants should be automatically provided, instead of the present hit or miss system, with extra care being funded by the relevant grant provider. This, it says, will get round the problem of separating out care from accommodation costs, and stop hostel dwellers losing out.

The government says it doesn't find the PSI proposals "practicable" or "sensible". You might also think it not very sensible to commission independent research and then ignore it. *Vicky Hutchings*



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# WELFARE WATCH

*Social fund officers are still underspending their community care grant budgets, but loans are up*

Social fund statistics for June, the fund's second full month, were issued last week. By Monday, DHSS officials were admitting that, as anyone used to dealing with DHSS figures would expect, many of them are wrong. The broad picture that emerges, however, is probably accurate. The figures show that the number of social fund loans made has roughly doubled. If the trend continues, social fund officers will soon be turning down most applications to keep within their cash limits.

One reason for the unexpected popularity of social fund loans is their size. Apart from "crisis" loans of £30-£40, needed because income support is now paid in arrears, the average is about £200. This is more than most people would have received under the old supplementary benefit rules; in fact, the rules became so tight that many of those now receiving loans would have got nothing.

Sadly, there is no sign of non-repayable community care grants taking off in the same way. The DHSS told social fund officers to aim to spend 20 per cent of their 1988-89 CCG budgets by the end of June. In the event, only a dozen offices reached 15 per cent and, as the table right shows, many had spent less than 2.5 per cent. Of the £60 million allocated for Great Britain, only £3.25 million had been spent in nearly three months. In Northern Ireland, nine out of 34 offices (not shown in the table) had used up less than 2.5 per cent of their annual budget.

The high spenders tend to be small offices far from the inner cities—Arbroath, Stranraer and Wick in Scotland, Goole and Seaham in the north east, Barnstaple in the south west—although they also include Swansea, Edmonton in north London, and one of the three Derby offices. But the big urban offices are more prominent among the low spenders. Glasgow, Liverpool and inner London offices all appear in the table, and if "low" had been defined as under 3 per cent, Toxteth, Clydeside, Port Glasgow, Provan and many others would have been added.

At first sight this is surprising. The need for money to promote community care can hardly be greater in Wick than in Glasgow. Part of the explanation is that Glasgow offices have far more generous budget allocations than most other areas. Local office budgets reflect the amounts spent on single payments in 1986-87, and Glasgow was always top of the single payments league. But relatively few single payments were for purposes now covered by CCGs: helping people to leave institutional care or preventing the need for their admission. Past expenditure on single payments, therefore, is a poor guide to the need for CCGs.

There is now an urgent need to stimulate demand for CCGs throughout the country. Social fund officers have an opportunity to make their job worthwhile by using their discretionary powers creatively. Local authorities should actively be seeking to identify needs for which grants could be made. And the DHSS should make the rules less restrictive—for instance, allowing payment of CCGs to people now disqualified because their invalidity benefit is just above income support level.

*Tony Lynes*

## Community Care Grants — the low spenders

| DHSS Offices | Percentage of budget spent by 30 June | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Liverpool, Belle Vale | 2.4 | Liverpool, Bootle | 1.9 |
| Oxford | 2.4 | Woodgrange Park | 1.9 |
| Southport | 2.4 | Chichester | 1.8 |
| Glasgow, Lauriston | 2.4 | Salford South | 1.8 |
| Sunderland South | 2.4 | Diss | 1.8 |
| Basingstoke | 2.3 | Paisley | 1.8 |
| Glasgow, Rutherglen | 2.3 | Wath-on-Dearn | 1.7 |
| Greenock | 2.3 | Bedford | 1.7 |
| Canning Town | 2.2 | Woking | 1.6 |
| Liverpool, Kirkby | 2.2 | Stockport North | 1.5 |
| Haverfordwest | 2.2 | Truro | 1.5 |
| Dover | 2.2 | Kendal | 1.5 |
| Glasgow, Anniesland | 2.1 | Camberwell | 1.4 |
| Motherwell | 2.1 | Aldershot | 1.3 |
| Dudley North | 2.1 | Coventry West | 0.9 |
| Walsall East | 2.1 | Nuneston | 0.9 |
| Manchester, Middleton | 2.0 | New Forest | 0.7 |
| Falkirk | 2.0 | Harrow | 0.7 |
| Sittingbourne | 2.0 | Folkestone | 0.5 |
| Porthmadog/Dolgellau | 1.9 | Neasden | 0.3 |
| Hemel Hempstead | 1.9 | Penzance | 0.3 |
| Chatham | 1.9 | Epsom | 0.1 |
| Glasgow, Parkhead | 1.9 | Hither Green | 0.02 |

## Shuffle won't rescue the NHS

Contrary to the accepted wisdom, Kenneth Clarke's unexpected elevation to Health Secretary is unlikely to alter significantly the findings of the NHS review. Clarke may still enjoy the reputation of being a wet—but one reason why Mrs Thatcher felt able to change the team was because the main proposals of her review are already fixed. She wanted a more aggressive presentation of the new policy than Moore could give. The cigar-smoking suede-shoed Clarke, the irrepressible David Mellor and the equally irrepressible Edwina Currie will make an impressive team.

As significant politically is William Waldgrave's move to take Mellor's place at the Foreign Office. Waldegrave has undoubtedly been a curb on the wilder excesses of Nicholas Ridley, and his loss will strike fear into the heart of Tory conservationists. Waldegrave struggled with Ridley to make the Housing Bill more acceptable and made 100 concessions to the measure Ridley regarded as his own. Who will now stand up to the Environment Secretary? Is it to be John Selwyn Gummer? *John Lewis*

# TAILGUNNER PARKINSON

"The press liked the paradox that the Putney rapist, Everald Irons, should have been a "born again" Christian. But surely anyone "born again" is in danger of boiling over—either sexually, socially, or both: in that sort of condition every emotion must be up for grabs and prone to staggering reversals.

Look at jolly old Jimmy Swaggart and Co. in the USA. When they're not exhorting God's wrath, they're up to their necks in erotic activities that make for sweaty hands, rolling eyeballs and a gift for swinging from chandeliers.

I don't doubt for a moment that on one level Everald Irons was as genuine a Christian as he was, on another level, an authentic criminal pervert. And now, as he sits in his cell, precariously protected against the assaults of other inmates by Rule 43, he is probably trying to place his present tribulations in some sort of religious context: "My God! My God! Why has thou forsaken me?"

Of course if this position is sustained, it won't help his prospects of early release much. The parole board has the greatest misgivings about serious offenders who decline to admit their crime. Probably the most fortunate process from his and society's point of view will be if guilt gradually reveals itself in sleep disturbances. A perceptive doctor may then be able to refer him for therapy.

But it's more likely that he will either become "politicised" and curse white society for his incarceration or, as he adjusts to prison life, move more deeply into the realms of sexual fantasy.

Not long ago I talked with a probation officer who at one time ran a prison group for sexual deviants. One of the things that worried him was that sex offenders frequently fed off each other's tales of criminality for masturbatory purposes. He concluded that these exchanges had an amazing and disturbing aphrodisiac quality about them.

But perhaps the most significant feature of reports on the Putney rapist case were that they ran side by side with the celebration of Nelson Mandela's birthday. Here we have a true paradox that demonstrates extreme public views of the black man in our society: at one end of the spectrum seen as a ruthless sexual molester and at the other as a near-deified martyr."



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DATABASE

# Pollution

Non-nuclear pollution is back on the agenda with a vengeance as the world comes out of the recession. It's not helping the government's water and electricity privatisation plans at all.

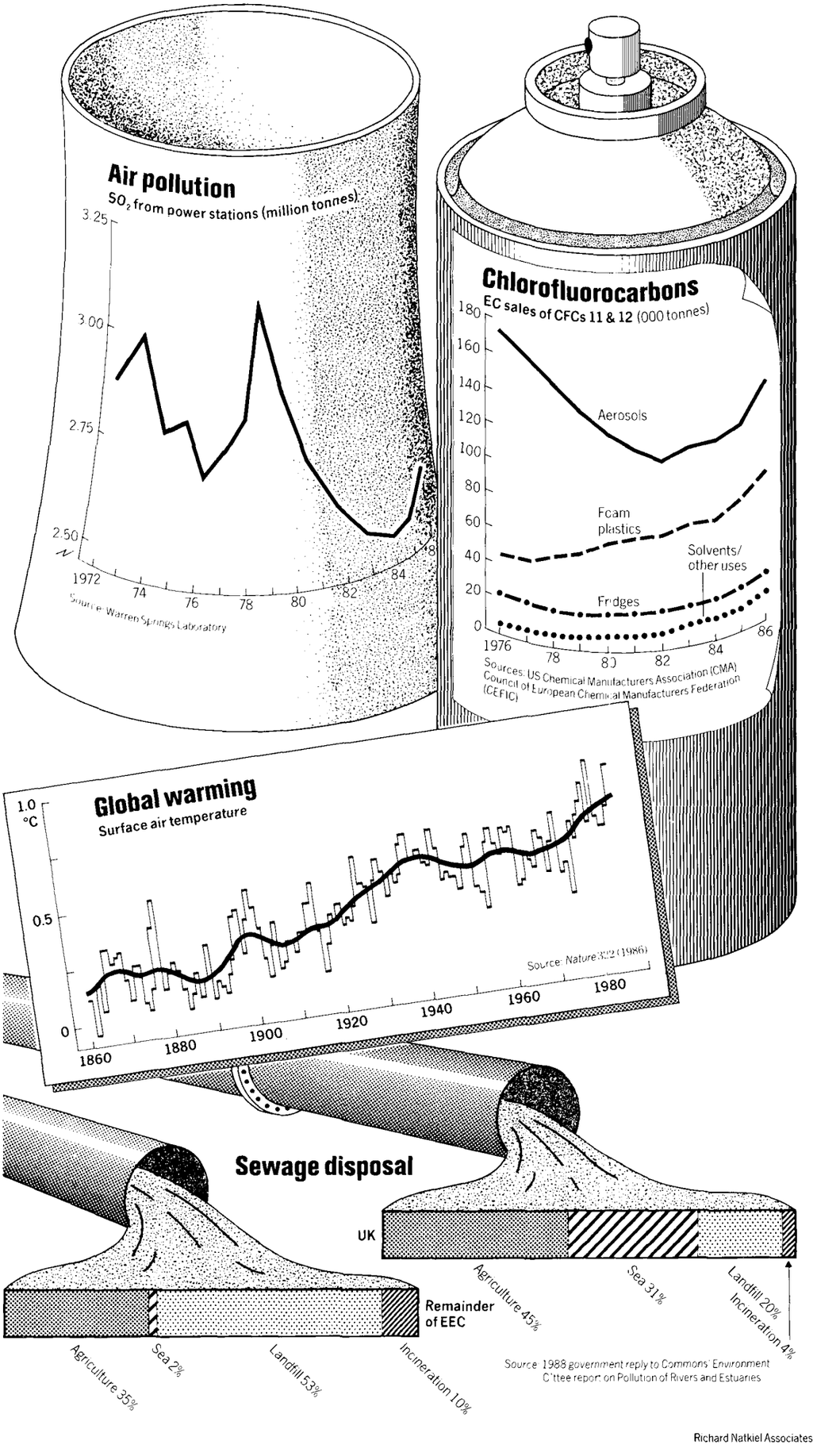
Both Energy Secretary Cecil Parkinson and the CEGB lobbied hard against the EC large power station directive, agreed last month. This requires all member states to make a 20 per cent reduction in sulphur dioxide emissions from large power stations (the principal gas in acid rain), by 1993—rising to 60 per cent by 2003. UK emissions have started to *rise* since 1984, with power stations making up 70 per cent of the total. But fitting gas scrubbing plant to all major ones could cost £2 billion, mean higher electricity prices and make private investment unattractive. Critics say that levels should be cut by 90 per cent by the late 1990s.

Fossil-fuelled power stations are also responsible for 30 per cent of all UK carbon dioxide emissions. While greenhouse gases like carbon dioxide (which reduce heat loss into space) pour into the atmosphere, the earth is getting warmer—the four warmest years on record have all occurred in the 1980s and 1987 was the warmest yet. It has even been suggested that the the polar icecaps might melt, raising sea levels by 2m by the 21st century. If nuclear power is increasingly seen as a dangerous and expensive option, then conserving energy and reducing demand may end up being the way forward.

Water privatisation also looks likely to hit snags, as a result of the decline in investment (in real terms) in sewage disposal from the 70s to the early 80s. Poor-quality effluent from inadequate sewage works has resulted in the downgrading of rivers since 1980. The EC seems likely to clamp down on the UK practice of dumping a third of its sewage sludge in the North Sea—giving water authorities another disposal problem.

UK industry has so far been allowed to escape quite lightly from the environmental problems of chlorofluorocarbons (gases which are thought to destroy the ozone layer). The Montreal Protocol, adopted in September 1987 by all CFC-producing countries, only requires a cut in production and consumption of 35 per cent and 50 per cent respectively by 1999. The Commons' Environment Committee believes that consumption of CFCs needs to be cut to 15 per cent of their current levels merely to stabilise the situation.

*Vicky Hutchings*

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ESSAY

# Britain's exit from politics

*Social theorist Zygmunt Bauman is Professor of Sociology at Leeds University. He has previously published two major essays in the "New Statesman": "From here to modernity" on 25 September 1987 and "Unstately Pleasure Dome" on 23 October 1987. He is also the author of "Memories of Class" (1982) and "Legislators and Interpreters" (1987)*

The Thatcher government is promoting the exit of human concerns from politics. It offers the people a massive programme of buying themselves out — making politics irrelevant to the pursuit of their goals and ideals. In parallel, political power has been reduced to a purely constraining, not enabling, force. So politics is no longer where people invest their hopes. Politics is a nuisance. Labour faces a truly formidable task. The nation is to be made a political body again. Private individuals are to become citizens. But is Labour up to the challenge?



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A spectre haunts the Labour Party; the spectre of its past. The past is a powerful force. It has a long and rich afterlife. It is there, even if one does not know or does not care. It may paralyse the will of those who believe in it. And it may confound the plans of those who do not.

The afterlife of the past is *memory*. Not the memory of yellowing photographs and dusty bookshelves; not memory of the "things past". The past lives through a different kind of memory, one which cannot be called back at will whenever one feels nostalgic, and laid to rest next morning. This memory is more like the ravines and crevasses which carve the gently undulating flatness of Yorkshire moors. The icebergs which sculpted it have long melted, but the landscape is still there, and will be there for a long time to come.

The memory of the historical past manifests itself in the way we see our world and live our lives today. In our knack for noticing the things which we learned to be important in the past, and glossing over others. In our tendency to respond to things exactly as we responded to them in the past. In our urge to squeeze every experience into old frames, to make the bizarre similar, and to dismiss the unfamiliar as a passing fancy or an aberration.

Yet all these inclinations and biases, through which the past lives its second life, are not merely qualities of our minds; they are not something we have learned, and can unlearn, with diligent effort and proper training. Memory shapes not only the fashion in which we see and act, but also the very things we see and act upon. The conditions under which we act, the resources we can summon to make our actions effective, the way in which our actions split into realistic and futile—are all traces of the past, are all its living memory. It is such memory which haunts the Labour Party today.

Unlike its continental counterparts, the Labour Party was a product of the trade union struggle for parliamentary representation. Through it, the unions pursued, and obtained, political protection for their economic interests. Quite naturally, the unions saw politics as an extension of their economic struggle. Quite naturally, the Labour Party saw the advocacy of trade union interests as the legitimation of its own political presence and the social guarantee of its political success. Neither of the two partners was wrong. As the trade unions grew so did the Labour Party. As the Labour Party's foothold in British politics expanded, so did the trade unions' muscle, self-confidence, and ability to attract new, non-unionised sections of the nation. Trade unions and Labour Party rose to power together. They stayed in power together. They are losing it together now. They have been united in glory and in defeat, like Captain Ahab and his ship *Pequod*.

The Labour Party of today cannot but be shaped by its collective memory. It acts under conditions and with resources which it inherited from its historical past. In the past, the Labour Party sailed to power on board a ship which it more than anybody else helped to make huge and mighty. It did not need another vehicle. It did not build another vehicle. It believed (and why shouldn't it?) that the old ship would last forever.

Benoit Jacques

*"In a curious reversal of political mechanisms, support for Thatcherism is actually a protest vote"*

It is only too easy to seek consolation in the charge that today's troubles are the fault of the navigators. That the officers have lost their compass, given wrong commands, or failed to inspire enough authority. That they do not properly care for the welfare of their crew, do not "get their message through", cannot "put their act together", or do not know how to "present a convincing *image*" of their competence. That they are a quarrelsome lot. That they paste over their differences. That they think only of being popular. That they do not think enough of being popular. Unfortunately, all such consolations are exactly what they are: consolations. Like the things they want to explain or excuse, they are mnemonic monuments to the past. If we reached the harbour so many times before, why cannot we do it now? Surely someone, some time, must have taken a wrong turn...Surely nothing can be wrong with the ship?

But there is something wrong, and the officers can do little about it. To put it bluntly, it matters less and less just how the officers will



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navigate their ship, *as long as it is the old ship that they navigate*.

To put it more bluntly still, the unique features which helped the Labour Party to its past victories have now become its liability, and stand behind its current defeats. It would do nicely for the party to be a thin, politically conscious crust on a vast and growing body of unionised labour, as long as that body remains vast and growing. The problem is, however, that the body is not at all as vast as it used to be, and it does not grow: it shrinks.

To start with, the big industry working class, that staunchest and most faithful constituency of Labour, gets smaller by the year. The process seems to be irreversible. The old medicine against unemployment—more profits lead to more investment, more investment means more jobs—does not work anymore. As in agriculture a hundred years ago, investment in industry means today less jobs, and productive growth goes hand-in-hand with a fall in employment. More industrial products means fewer industrial workers. And so that working class which flocked into unions, to unite forces for the war against capitalist exploiters, to wrench from the greedy bosses a few more shillings and a few more hours of rest, is fast falling in numbers.

There are few islands left of those big industry craftsmen, who saw in their skills their life-long identity, and in their jobs their life-long destiny. Those who have survived the current post-industrial revolution are mostly highly-skilled employees of such big companies as can use their monopolistic powers to exempt their product from the hazards of the market and secure a steady flow of profits. Such companies can afford to share more of their profits with their labour; their profits come now from the exploitation of the consumer markets.

Secondly, gone or almost gone, are mining villages, steel towns, textile cities and other part-ghettos, part-fortresses of working class life, where shaft-towers or factory chimneys cast their giant shadows on working homes and working lives, on workers and their families, on fathers' lost chances and their sons' hopes. Gone or almost gone is that working class *moral density*, which came together with *physical density*. New workers are sprinkled amidst faceless residential estates whose inhabitants are united by the way they spend their money, not the way they earn it. If they share experiences with neighbours, these are not the experiences of work, company policy or exploitation.

Thirdly, most of the new generation of workers are occasional, temporary and part-time. They neither can nor wish to think of their jobs as a life-long occupation; much less as a density. They come and go, much as those people whom they meet on the way. They have no lot to be shared, and no mates to share their lot with. They see little reason, and no gain, in tying themselves down to the fate of the others; this is not their fate. They do not view steady, well-paid and contractually-protected jobs as viable prospects. Such jobs are few and far between; they are also closely and jealously guarded by the trade unions against intruders. Not only do the new workers not feel attracted by the unions; more often than not, they see them as their adversaries. With jobs elusive, unstable and unreliable, most of the new generation cannot define themselves through their work—however much they may desire it to be otherwise (and that, in ideal circumstances, they *would* desire it to be otherwise, has been amply demonstrated by sociological research).

Work does not occupy anymore that central position it enjoyed in the heyday of industrial unionism. It has moved away from the centre of individual life, of society and of the social system. For the individual, work does not supply the stuff of people's dreams, self-definitions and life-plans. For society, it does not provide that cement which holds it together—like the life-long duty to work once did. It no longer figures as the most prominent among the functions which must be fulfilled to keep the social system going. On top of all this, work does not constitute now that nodal point where the life-world of the individual, integration of society and reproduction of the system met—to be reconciled, mutually adjusted and coordinated. In that once central and crucial role it has been replaced by consumer freedom. It is in consumer choice that individual cravings, the moral unity of society, and self-reproduction of the system meet today.

> *'The eviction of human concerns from politics has been forced upon the life of the nation'*

This relegation of work means inevitably that trade unions embrace fewer people and a smaller part of their lives. Trade unionism becomes marginal—for human life, for the life of society, for the vital systematic processes. More and more, trade unions are reduced to one only of the many roles they once played: that of *interest groups*. Trade unions defend and promote the interests of their members. They can do it only in competition with interests of everybody else—including non-unionised employees and members of other unions. We hear the leader of a giant union declare that the gain of £340,000 in unpaid fees is the most important consequence of his union's expulsion from the TUC. We watch the growing band of union leaders ready to mortgage their future militancy for the sake of keeping other unions out. We will soon see the unedifying spectacle of unions poaching each other's members and jobs.

Well, the trade unions do what interest groups are expected to do. To them, politics means what it can and ought to mean to organisations specialising in public protection of private interests: getting more for their members. They pursue this politics as well as they can. It is not their fault that what they are doing is ever more loosely related to the life chances, interests and daily concerns of anybody but their members, trade unionism is charted somewhere in the corner; certainly not where real life is.

Benoit Jacques

The Labour Party, being the political representation of trade unionism, must translate unionised interests into a national platform, where the majority of people may find a home for the majority of their concerns. The present-day unionised interests defy such a translation. It is not that people are put off by the rifts and splits and squabbles which allegedly are Labour's trade-mark. For the Conservative governments have easily outdone Labour in the volume of publicly washed dirty linen and their record of sometimes shameful, sometimes ridiculous, blunders. And yet the support for a government famous for its disdain for public opinion remains steady and staunch.

It is not the divisions which put off the prospective voters—but their irrelevance; the zeal with which all the factions insist on waging battles which have long ago ceased to inspire and animate most of the spectators. It is not the



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radicalism of Labour which frightens away its potential supporters—but its irrelevance to the truly radical problems of today. It is not the socialism of Labour which the potential voters cannot stomach—but its antiquated meaning, rooted in historical memory and ossified in party institutions.

In a curious reversal of normal political mechanisms support for Thatcherism is *a protest vote*. A protest against lack of touch with reality. A protest against the grip of historical memory, inscribed in specialised and marginal institutions and not any more shaping the perceptions, hopes and dreams of society at large.

Admittedly, this cause of the popular refusal to support Labour is not easy to deduce from the findings of public opinion polls. Exploring social trends through opinion polls and other market surveys means confusing the study of history with market research. Short-term changes in *political fashions* tell us next to nothing about *social priorities*. One can perhaps rely—more or less—on the voting intentions such polls portray, but one should beware of believing the *reasons* which people give. Reasons are implied, suggested and imputed by the pollsters. They normally represent the volatile "political agenda" culled by the media from the government's or the opposition's current moves or blunders, rather than deep thoughts and hot debates in which the electorate has been engrossed. Strongly as they feel about supporting one party or refusing to support another, the voters can seldom explain their feelings. Still less do they know what may possibly change these feelings. All the more eager are they to embrace such articulations of their feelings which seem to confirm that the choice has been right. When the pollsters press for reasons for withdrawing from Labour, they do their best to pass with honours the exam in the latest formula of perennial "Labour Party trouble". Everything, in principle, will do, if spelled out properly and repeated frequently enough. Today, it may be "they do not have a defence policy". Tomorrow, "they cannot get their act together". Yet another day, "they are infested with trotskyites and homosexuals". Or "Kinnock rules as a dictator". Or "Kinnock is too weak for a leader". Reasons change with astounding inconsistency, together with fashionable preoccupations of the media, but the voting trends remain remarkably stable and consistent. Whatever else opinion polls may suggest, deep down such trends reflect shifts in the social structure and in the political conditions of the nation. And to those, historical memory offers little guidance.

The shifts are, indeed, formidable. Among their most seminal effects is a change to which the Labour Party has not been prepared by its past victories and defeats: there is no more one paramount class conflict which splits the nation right down the middle; there is no one issue or one interest which polarises the nation into opposing political camps; there is no longer a real opportunity to "globalise" numerous concerns and divisions around any single, overwhelming and hence unifying, purpose. In other words, genuine interests and cravings, satisfied or unsatisfied, are not easy to translate into a universally appealing, winning political platform. For all we see and know, the age of big political parties, as reflections of established collective or aggregate interests, and hence the principal vehicles of their defence and promotion, may be over.

*Thatcherism has responded to the new social structures by offering the public a massive programme of buying oneself out from politics. The dismantling of effective citizenship is presented as the triumph of freedom; as liberation.*

Thatcher's government practices one of the possible responses to new conditions. To the new difficulty with translating human concerns into political programmes, it responds by promoting the exit of human concerns from politics. It responds to the resistance of local and group interests by casting such interests off the limits of the political agenda. It offers the public a massive programme of *buying oneself out*, singly or severally, from politics; of making politics irrelevant to the pursuit of individual or collective goals and ideas. This dismantling of effective citizenship is presented as the triumph of freedom; as liberation. What makes such presentation credible is the parallel reduction of political power to the role of a purely constraining force, and an emphatic surrender of its *enabling* function. Politics means now taxes ("less money in your pocket"), petty regulations ("no freedom of choice"), and official secrets. Politics is not where you invest your hopes. Life is elsewhere. Politics is a nuisance. The less of it, the better.

The eviction of human concerns and cravings from politics is not only practised at the level of national government. It has been forced upon the political life of the nation in its totality, from top to bottom. Local government has been stripped, one by one, of all its functions relevant to people's welfare, and thus effectively disabled



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as a tool of political articulation of interests. Legal prohibition of trade union solidarity has made the translation of private interests into political issues all but impossible. Creeping privatisation of public services has made them immune to improvement through political efforts. Less and less can politics "do for you". "Politics of freedom" can perhaps bring about freedom from politics. But it certainly has freed politics from citizens' interest.

The government's response to the new conditions consists, therefore, of promoting and practising the *depoliticisation* of the nation, and virtual *disfranchisement* of citizenship. In addition to demonstrating the need to change the political guard, which has been the traditional task of all opposition, it must demonstrate the *need for politics*. The less is left of the politics' old "enabling" capacity and the more uniformly irksome are its leftovers, the easier it is for the government to win its battles hands down. Whatever the opposition says, will be taken down and used against it: it will stand charged with conspiracy against freedom.

As the major party of opposition, Labour faces a formidable task. The nation is to be made again into a political body. Private individuals are to become citizens. Democracy is to mean again political participation, not freedom from politics. The nation is to resume duties of self-government it has all but forgotten. Labour's own historical memory cannot help here. Its traditional constituency, the "social carrier" of this memory, is not just receding, but is also shorn of any vision sufficient to meet new conditions and new tasks. A Labour Party which wants to be a force for the nation's political revival has today no natural or inherited constituency. It must create such a constituency. It must become a social movement.

The exit of the nation from politics sponsored by the government has of course a price. And the price is growing by the hour. Like in all other known attempts to effect a radical cure for the organic ailments of capitalism, this medicine has side effects which may in the long run prove worse than the illness it promised to cure. There are the notorious social and moral costs: the malignant growth of the new "no-class" of disenfranchised poor; redevelopment designed to sky-rocket real estate values which in turn force lower-income families out of the cities; unstoppable impoverishment of all agencies of societal reproduction; the collapse of social responsibility, solidarity and mutual help; the morally devastating cult of quick profit; the passing of effective social control into the invisible hands of supra-local, supra-national corporations—exempt from supervision by local or national authorities, not to mention those countless millions whose lives are contaminated by the scum and litter of the chase for gain.

The "exit from politics" strategy demands that more and more families and individuals buy themselves off from the areas of public deprivation (underfinanced health service, education, housing, sanitary infrastructure, transport), so that they may feel less urge to press for their improvement. It demands, in other words, that the satisfaction of collective needs be sought through individual appropriation and consumption. For everyone but the wealthiest this means a net loss. Even if lost security is not counted among the losses, the savings from reduced taxation can hardly balance the expenditure needed to replace social services with privately purchased goods. The result for most people is a falling quality of life, masquerading as a rising standard of living. In the joyful bustle of the shopping malls, a suspicion of fraud may be temporarily silenced. But not for ever. The gains accumulate on one end of social ladder, while losses pile up on the other. Those who gain least from the "more money in your pocket" policy most need public provision for essential needs. Those whose money truly grows, did not need such provision in the first place.

Goods serving essential collective needs are in short supply because they are not profitable. Goods which are profitable, and hence most keenly supplied by the gain-seeking economy, require in most cases the creation of new needs and the conjuring up heretofore non-existing consumers. Between themselves, the two tendencies create an ominous imbalance in the national economy, which only a proper *social* accountancy can reveal (not the narrow public accountability which measures economic growth by counting company profits). Only political action can hope to rectify this imbalance. It is doubtful whether the exit from politics will cure capitalism. The nation, will pay the price of the experiment.

> *Social solidarity—the core of any socialist alternative to the privatised, world—has become democracy's last hope*

This is a political message with no clearly defined addressees. Unlike traditional political platforms, it does not demand a redistribution of national wealth from one class to another, with the principles of its measurement and management left intact. It calls instead for the reconstitution of the nation as a self-governing political body. It calls for civic defence against the creeping expropriation of politics. It calls for democratic self-determination of collective—local and national—needs. It calls for new civic responsibility. It calls for a new, social book-keeping, able to reveal the true *public* cost of private solutions to *public* problems. It calls for drawing conclusions from the fact that goods have *use* value, in addition to an *exchange* value. It calls for a new breed of citizen, skilful in the arts of democratic politics and fighting to be in charge of an area broader than that area, wired with burglar alarms and sealed with window bolts, which they call "home". It promotes freedom as something more than consumer choice: as the ability to co-determine the fate of one's country.

Thatcherism has confined politics to a television spectacle and made the nation into an audience. An effective opposition to Thatcherism needs a nation of political actors. Thatcherism has promoted freedom as the right not to be bothered by public affairs. An effective opposition to Thatcherism needs freedom as an unconstrained and enthusiastically exercised right to manage them.

A most profound restructuring of British sociciety calls for a no less profound restructuring of its political forces. Whether it knows it or not, whether it likes it or not, all future (and effective) opposition to the government presiding over the national exit from politics has been cast in the role of the defender of political democracy and steward of citizen rights. Social responsibility and solidarity—that hard core of any socialist alternative to the privatised, market-ruled world—has become democracy's last hope. It has no established, institutionalised interests to back it. It can grow only together with the constituency it has to create for itself.

In the new society moral considerations are sneered at and social engineered deprivations are represented as the wages of personal sins. As deprivations are many and diverse, the issues on which the urge to public action tends to focus do not easily combine into a nation-wide platform. There is no one global conflict, whose resolution would resolve all other conflicts, and no one grievance which, once satisfied, would put paid to all other grievances. The "no class" of the new poor, spawned by the "buy yourself out of the trouble" policy, does fall victim to *multiple deprivation*. But so many other people suffer deprivation in one or another form. Nothing unites their specific deprivations but the need of democratic action to redress them.

Such democratic action casts all such people, though they may well not know it, in potential opposition to a government which is about to decree that "acting in the public interest" is not an acceptable justification for the activity of public servants. It makes them potential members of a social movement which would promote democratic self-determination as the supreme right and duty of free citizens and the condition of their political freedom.

The spiritual habits and institutional structures which combine into its historical memory do not help the Labour Party to turn into such a social movement. By its historical memory, that party is thrust in the role of a political representative of sectional (and shrinking) interests, and held down to a conception of politics as serving those surviving interests "by other means". These interests made cannot readily be made universal. Increasingly, they are indeed but sectional interests. This is not just Labour's ill-fortune. Deprived of a viable alternative, the exit from politics carries on unabated, aided by the glittering prizes of new market wonders and abetted by the official sermons about the moral goodness of riches.●



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**Ramsay and Margaret MacDonald with (from left) Malcolm, David, Ishbel and Alister, c. 1907**

# Love letters on red paper

**A SINGULAR MARRIAGE: A LABOUR LOVE STORY IN LETTERS AND DIARIES**
**Ramsay and Margaret MacDonald (edited by Jane Cox)**
Harrap £14.95

*Sheila Rowbotham*

It is hard to imagine that any collection of love letters could be as unrevealing as those between Ramsay MacDonald and Margaret Gladstone.

The story begins in 1895 when Ramsay MacDonald, campaigning for the Independent Labour Party in Southampton was sent a donation by Margaret Gladstone, recently radicalised by charitable work in Hoxton, East London. A rather ponderous letter followed in which the future Labour Prime Minister put her straight on Tom Mann's irregular suggestions for support to the locked out shoemakers. At 28 already on the moral high ground, Ramsay MacDonald explained: "...those who hold responsible positions in the Labour movement should not give advice which would weaken a sense of social responsibility in the larger issues."

The romance blossomed over the year generating an inordinate amount of letters which have been collected laboriously by Jane Cox into a substantial volume.

Unfortunately the notorious vagueness of MacDonald appears to have been a personal trait of character rather than an elaborate strategy to unite the opposing poles of right and left in the Labour Party. Although he waffles, sometimes daily, to "Lassie", he reveals remarkably little about his character. A tooth comb reading produces hints of a sense of destiny combined with schmaltzy self-dramatisation. A capacity for obsessive work and efficient administrative skills went with depression, tetchiness and anxiety about his health. His overwhelming desire for respectability and acceptance is evident. Not only was he working class, he was also born out of wedlock.

Ramsay was what used to be called "a ladies' man" (though of a different kind from Tom Mann, who wrote gushing letters to Margaret), but it was Margaret who had to propose. After an initial bout of panic Ramsay accepted. The Gladstone family were somewhat alarmed at having a "revolutionary" in their midst who might persuade Margaret to make off with the family silver. But they managed to adjust to the young politician and journalist at the wedding as "both manly and gentlemanly".

Ramsay might be regarded as a forebear of designer socialism. He could be relied upon to bring a certain style to public occasions.

He had a peculiarly stifling manner of idealising the women close to him. He was to eulogise Margaret in his memoir with Ruskinian sentiments:

"To turn to her in stress and strain was like going into a sheltered haven, weary and worn, buffeted and discouraged. My lady would heal and soothe me with her cheery faith and steady conviction and send me forth again to smite and be smitten."

His mother's official image was sweet Highlands simplicity. Occasionally however she made her escape. Margaret wrote to him in 1900, sounding unusually fraught, "When you come home ask your mother what public place she was drinking in at 10.30pm on Saturday night, and why she made me give her my latchkey at 9.30 on Sunday, so that she might go out walking with a man I never saw before. I am dreading tomorrow evening; she is going to galivant again, I know."

Ramsay told Enid Stacey in 1894, "My mother is a kind of rough diamond...When a raw animal on a farm she trusted my scoundrel of a father too much. But poor soul, she has done her best for me and I am now trying to repay her."

If Ramsay inherited any of the "raw animal" stuff he kept it out of his love letters but he did put the Gladstone silver to some use. Early in 1900 he became secretary of the newly formed Labour Representation Committee. He was the



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obvious candidate partly because he was efficient and hard working but also because it was unpaid and Margaret had a private income.

Even in these early days his driving passion seemed to be the faith that enlightened moderation would convince the ruling class of the virtues of socialism. It was not only the limits of class consciousness which made him reject the marxism of the Social Democratic Federation, but any idea that conflict could generate social change for the better. The refrain, "if our fellows would only be reasonable", began as early as 1894 after he had been dining at the Bradford Liberal Club.

He disliked syndicalism and abhorred Communism, arguing instead for his version of ethical socialism, which made him a bit suspect in some sections of the Labour Party as an intellectual. He mixed his ethics always with pragmatism but took principled stands, against the Boer War, against war credits and conscription, for the Russian revolution. He presumably thought he was acting correctly when he formed the National government in 1931.

He clearly loved his wife very much and was devastated by her early death in 1911. Margaret's letters are worthy but somewhat dull. She wants to go "on to some useful work", was a member of the Women's Industrial Council, supported trades union organisation among women, researched women's work and helped form the Women's Labour League. She was a good committee woman.

She bore five children, one son died of fever and the others were trundled to meetings or left with the char. She tried to combine having a family with her political work—no mean achievement.

Her main act of rebellion was to marry the socialist parvenu. "Some day I shall fall in love with somebody that no-one approves of", she declared prophetically before Ramsay materialised.

Ramsay has suffered from biographical blight until recently. Jane Cox wanted to set "the record straight" with these letters. By redirecting our gaze from the last six years and showing us the "loving husband" of the earlier period, she hopes to rescue him from Labour demonology. In fact of course there were umpteen reasons to be irritated with him long before 1931 if you happened to be active in the suffrage movement, trades unions, the unemployed organisations, campaigning for birth control or fighting for more democracy in the Labour Party.

Nor does letting Margaret and Ramsay "speak for themselves" really work. The reader has to wade through pages of inconsequence. "Off to Shoreditch", Margaret records and Ramsay recounts how he has understood women's views on love when he reads a popular romance about an actress's lovelorn suicide.

Still—judging from the excerpts—it's a relief she spared us his poetry and his appalling novel.

# Playing doctors and lawyers

**TREAT ME RIGHT: ESSAYS IN MEDICAL LAW AND ETHICS**
**Ian Kennedy**
Oxford University Press £35

*Helena Kennedy*

According to Ian Kennedy medical law used to be fun. All he had to do was read a lot of strange American and Commonwealth cases or the odd 19th century English decision, decide they were irrelevant and get on with the pleasurable exercise of making up the answers. Sadly, in the last few years the Courts have got in on the act and medical lawyers are having to do their homework. But the author is clearly more than equal to the task. His essays, which are compiled from lectures and papers produced in the last 10 years, examine most of the major moral and ethical issues of our times.

Because he is rarely hampered by judicial pronouncement, Kennedy is able to explore his subject like a scholarly game of Scruples and on to this legal tabula rasa write large his own views. It is enough to turn other lawyers green that this particular learned friend has backed such a winner: a new legal field showing every sign of developing considerably in the years to come. And nor is it obscure and arid law. This is the subject material for whole series of television documentaries. This is the rich canvas of life and death, on which we all have opinions.

"A baby is born with Spina Bifida. An assessment is made of the severity of the handicap. A decision is taken that the baby should not be operated upon, but be given analgesics or sedatives. The baby subsequently dies."

"An elderly patient has a form of illness which is potentially fatal but which can be treated. The treatment, however, is very expensive and even with treatment the patient would have a restricted life. If the NHS spends part of its budget on this elderly patient, it means not spending it on someone else."

"The progressive nature of a young man's condition meant that he needed treatment in an intensive care unit with 24-hour-a-day supervision, breathing only with the aid of a respirator. Doctors struggled to keep him alive. Finally, the patient himself asked that the doctors kill him: they did so—through a drugs overdose."

Ian Kennedy's basic tenet is that many of the decisions taken by doctors are not purely medical and therefore they should not be left to doctors alone. Doctors do not have the unique competence to decide what is right and wrong, any more than lawyers do, and the public expects greater accountability than ever before. Along with medical advance has come a more informed and educated population which is no longer prepared to accept the paternalistic notion that doctor knows best.

Yet one of the most interesting sections of a really riveting book is that which deals with the struggle to have the patients' rights enshrined in law. The transatlantic doctrine of informed consent, defining the nature of the consent which a doctor must obtain from his patient, is still not part of English law. Instead we still deny the patient's autonomy and place considerable power in the hands of the medical profession.

Among other subjects, these essays range over the many reproductive issues which made the news in recent years: post-coital birth control, contraception for the 15 year old, the rights of a father in relation to his unborn child. In the context of abortion, Kennedy asks whether it is right for doctors who have contracted to the NHS to serve the community, to withdraw the service of abortion from a patient because of his own personal moral objections.

Ian Kennedy is that rare lawyer who writes with an accessible and lively style and this book should reach an audience well beyond lawyers and doctors. I suspect he is really more excited by ethics and moral philosophy than the Law. Hopefully he will now be turning his attentions to the subjects of embrionic research, AIDS and also the attacks upon the NHS, all of which are likely to throw up many moral and legal dilemmas for the medical profession and for patients. In one chapter of this book he struggles with the problems of technology and resource allocation and, in looking for a guiding principle, defines *justice* for us. It is a definition worth keeping.

"The notion of justice which I find most convincing is that which tells us that we ought to seek a society in which each person is accepted as of equal moral worth and has equal opportunity to enjoy an equal share of the total sum of society's goods. A particular feature of such a view of what is 'just' is that any attempt to translate it into practice must begin by favouring the weakest and the least advantaged—since these are the people least likely to have the opportunity to enjoy an equal share of what we have, and are thus most in need of help."

# Goodnight, sour prince

**THE SECRET FILE OF THE DUKE OF WINDSOR**
**Michael Bloch**
Bantam Press £14.95

*David Cannadine*

"What a smug stinking lot my relations are, and you've never seen such a seedy worn out bunch of old hags most of them have become." Thus His Royal Highness Prince Edward Albert Christian George Andrew Patrick David, Duke of Windsor and former King of England and Emperor of India, described those who had once been his nearest and dearest, when he encountered them anew at the tribal gathering for Queen Mary's funeral. Indeed, such was the level to which relations had sunk between the black sheep and the rest of the royals in the bitter and protracted aftermath of the Abdication, that his



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hypercritical view of them was heartily reciprocated in Buckingham Palace itself.

Once again, the purpose of Michael Bloch's latest book is to put the Duke of Windsor's view, and to show how justified were his feelings that he and his wife had been shabbily treated in 1936-7, and were subsequently the objects of a spiteful and unrelenting Palace vendetta. In particular, Bloch throws new light on the Abdication settlement, especially the protracted quarrels over money, over Fort Belvedere and over the Duchess's title. But thereafter, the book is little more than a routine account of the Windsors' German visit, their time in the Bahamas, his unsuccessful attempts to obtain a post-war job from the British government, and the ghost-writing of their memoirs.

As usual, Bloch attempts to defend the Windsors from the indifference or the censure of posterity by letting them speak for themselves. But once again, the difficulty with this approach is that the evidence merely reinforces the general view that the Duke was dim, vain, foolish, paranoid and narrow minded, and quite incapable of taking a broader view. In the first place, compared with most royals who have lost out over the centuries in the battle for advantage at Court, Windsor and Wallis escaped relatively unscathed. After all, he kept his head and his not inconsiderable private fortune, and he was given a new title and a pension. Anne Boleyn did not do nearly so well.

But in addition, it is clear that Windsor never really appreciated the magnitude of his misdemeanour in giving up the throne. He naively believed that by abdicating, the slate would be wiped clean, and that he could go back to being a fully accredited member of the royal family. In fact, having resigned as sovereign he had, in the manner of the Monty Python parrot, effectively passed on and officially ceased to be. Hence the efforts to keep him out of the country, and to ensure that, if he had any children, they should not assume royal rank and become a threat to the new royal line. But Windsor was at once so proud and so stupid that he never understood this: and nor does Bloch.

The Duke's underlying tragedy was that in the matriarchal monarchy of the 20th century, he was the ultimate example of the completely castrated male. His reproductive equipment was reputedly of diminutive dimensions. The married women he invariably fell for were essentially mother-substitutes. He failed to hold down the non-macho job of being a modern constitutional monarch, something which even his non-charismatic younger brother successfully managed to do. And when he finally did marry, the union was childless. According to the Duchess, her husband was "not heir-conditioned". But the real problem was that, in more senses than one, Windsor was simply not up to it.

Of course, family quarrels are never particularly edifying spectacles, especially when—as in this case—private disagreements carry with them unavoidable public consequences. Beyond any doubt, the Abdication and its long drawn-out sequel was a squalid and shabby episode, from which no one emerges with very much credit. But it cannot be said that the publication of this new material does much to rehabilitate the Duke of Windsor. Having abdicated in haste, there was nothing left for him to do except to spend the rest of his life repenting and resenting at leisure. And, to almost everyone's extreme embarrassment, that is precisely what he did.

# Archer's immortality

**IN FOR A PENNY: THE UNAUTHORISED BIOGRAPHY OF JEFFREY ARCHER**
**Jonathan Mantle**
Hamish Hamilton £11.95

*Philip Oakes*

Jeffrey Archer, "the mouth from Louth", Thatcherite icon and opportunist extraordinary, begs insistently to have the rug pulled from under his feet and, for many readers, the best thing about this gossipy, "unauthorised", biography will be the fact that he won't like it. At least, one assumes not. It is unauthorised in the sense that after initially agreeing to talk to the author and

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*How safe is justice in the hands of a jury?*

**Findlay and Duff: The Jury Under Attack**

1988. Edited by **Mark Findlay**, BA, LLB, LLM (Syd), Dip Crim (Edin); and **Peter Duff**, LLB, Dip Crim (Edin).

In recent years the jury system has come under increasing scrutiny for a whole variety of reasons. Contrarily, the lack of such a system in cases such as those involving terrorism provokes questions of a different degree and is a cause of considerable public concern.

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encouraging friends and associates to do likewise, the congenitally gabby Archer cancelled several interviews (political commitments, his wife's illness), with the result that *In For a Penny* is Hamlet without the prince, an omission which may indicate disapproval but which could also be seen as a measure of supreme self-confidence. Why bother to co-operate? Why waste time on yet another critical hack? His track record gives Archer good reason to regard himself as fire-proof and it is unlikely that this book will give him serious cause to change his mind.

All the same, the tale it tells of a bumpy career in fund-raising, PR, politics and popular fiction is a success story so tacky that only a colossal self-esteem could hold it together. He was born a stunted child but rapidly gained inches after diving on his head in the school swimming pool and going through a remedial course of traction. In 1947 he raised £3.17.6d during a Bob-a-Job-Week at Weston-super-Mare and received a congratulatory letter from the Chief Scout. Years later he claimed credit for raising £1m for an Oxfam appeal by enlisting the sponsorship of the Beatles. But the deal was actually clinched by Oxfam's long-suffering Press Officer, Pat Davidson, and the Beatles' opinion of Archer was summarised by Ringo who declared, "He'd probably bottle my pee and sell it for £5". A slight miscalculation there; with Archer's flair for finance the price tag would be nearer £5,000.

He was a fine athlete and in 1965 became President of Oxford University Athletics Club. The following year he married a brilliant young science graduate named Mary Weeden and three years later, after a contentious spell of fund-raising for the United Nations Association (during which he fell foul of its chairman, Humphrey Berkeley, who accused Archer of padding his expenses) he was elected MP for Louth. His ambition, he let it be known, was to become Prime Minister.

He also planned to become a millionaire before he was 30, but in the event lost over £270,000 (all of it borrowed) in a Canadian company gutted by share-pushers and, with threats of bankruptcy proceedings looming over him, resigned his seat in 1974. Nothing daunted he wrote his first novel, every word of it in longhand, about four men who discover they have been swindled out of their money in a share-pushing fraud. Zealously touted by his agent, Deborah Owen, wife of the good doctor, *Not a Penny More, Not a Penny Less* became the first of Archer's seven best-sellers. He paid his debts and preached the gospel of self-sufficiency.

To his publisher, Tom Maschler, he confided his dream of one day winning the Nobel Prize for literature ("Jeffrey, I think the odds are stacked against you", said Maschler) but the Leaderene beckoned and once again Archer was back in the fold as Deputy Chairman of the Conservative Party, a post he held (despite rumblings from Willie Whitelaw and the distrust of Norman Tebbit) until the fateful encounter with the prostitute Monica Coughlan and its sequel in court.

Mantle's account of the action for libel against the *Star* and its fragrant conclusion—judicial compliments for Mary, £500,000 for Archer—provides a suitably happy ending to the story. But, despite some shallow pop psychology and an inability to distinguish between "infer" and "imply", what the book also portrays is a lonely, driven man who will always be denied the position and esteem he so desperately craves. His fleeting claim to immortality is appropriate. In the court hearing it was accepted that—for reasons which continue to baffle—he paid Monica Coughlan £2,000 to flee the country. In the popular idiom this sum has become known as "an Archer".

# What might have been

**THE POPULAR FRONT IN FRANCE: DEFENDING DEMOCRACY 1934-1938**
**Julian Jackson**
Cambridge University Press £30

*Douglas Johnson*

In 1948 a meeting was held in one of the largest amphitheatres of the Sorbonne to commemorate the centenary of the 1848 revolution. The first speaker was Léon Blum. In a typically sensitive and appreciative account of the leaders of 1848 he pronounced the words: "they were frightened of causing fear". It seemed that the whole audience murmured to itself. Was not Blum indulging in a self-portrait and a description of the government which he led from 1936 to 1937? After all Blum's Popular Front had been a failure, just as the Second Republic had been a failure. 1848 resulted in a reactionary king being replaced by a reactionary emperor, the same Assembly that had been elected with a left-wing majority in 1936 eventually voted full powers to Marshal Pétain in 1940.

There are at least two legends about the Popular Front. There is that which arises from films and from reminiscence. The processions, the banners, the slogans and the forest of closed fists are associated with holidays with pay, the first visit to the sea-side and dedicated school-teachers giving history lessons to the striking workers who were occupying their factories. And there is the legend of a fastidious and timorous Blum, delaying the formation of his government in order to fulfil the constitutional niceties, unable to realise the revolutionary potential of the situation, failing to understand economic realities, constantly considering the possibilities of resignation until suddenly throwing in his hand in June 1937.

It was possible to have many attitudes to the Popular Front. In 1936 Claudel expressed his sympathy for the ordinary people who lived in appalling conditions and his contempt for the bourgeoisie who would have wished to deny them the right to have holidays with pay. Yet in 1940 he rejoiced when the republic was abolished since it meant the end of demonstrations, strikes, clenched fists and petitions which were signed *pêle-mêle* by Communists and Catholics alike.

It is thus a complex and controversial subject that Julian Jackson examines in this careful and extremely well informed survey. One of the many merits of this judicious book is his refusal to confine himself to the political, economic and diplomatic aspects of government. He describes how the Popular Front was born in the streets, especially in the Republican heartland of Paris, by the squares of the Bastille, the Nation and the République, in the political halls (like the Mutualité) and the sports stadia (like the Vel d'Hiv). He describes too "the cultural explosion" associated with the Popular Front, when Renoir set about making his film on the Revolution. This was to be paid for by public subscription, a film for the people, by the people and about the people, showing the birth of a nation. As the patriots from Marseilles move across France, taking possession of their country, they parallel the workers on holiday, moving into the countryside and the beaches.

But Jackson is too realistic a historian to dwell in euphoria. Soon the demonstrating crowds grew smaller, or became hostile. Renoir's *La Marseillaise* was a flop. And it can be argued, more forcefully than Jackson does, that the deep weaknesses of the Popular Front were all present at its origins. The reassuring statements made by Radicals immediately after the elections, the deliberate tactics of the centre parties to let the Front discredit itself, the advice to opposition newspapers to be moderate in their attacks, all these were very significant. Perhaps Blum should never have sought to be Prime Minister. Perhaps his instincts were right, and he should have resigned earlier. But then the nostalgia for what might have been would have grown even stronger.

# The Black arts

**STORMS OF THE HEART**
***Kwesi Owusu (editor)***
Camden Press £12.95
**BEHIND THE MASQUERADE**
**Kwesi Owusu and Jacob Ross**
Arts Media Group £6.95

*David Edgar*

In *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain*, Kwesi Owusu emphasised the immanently multi-genre character of Black art, and the consequent difficulties it has had with critics and funding organisations. As editor of *Storms of the Heart*, Owusu has expressed this reality in form as well as content. The book contains poetry, polemic, a small amount of fiction and a great deal of illustration. In this—and in its graphic style—it resembles the didactic anthologies of the late sixties (Berke's *Counter-Culture*, the *Whole Earth Catalogue*, *Our Bodies Our Selves*) and is none the worse for that.

The initial section of the book concentrates on the Black presence in Europe's cultural land-



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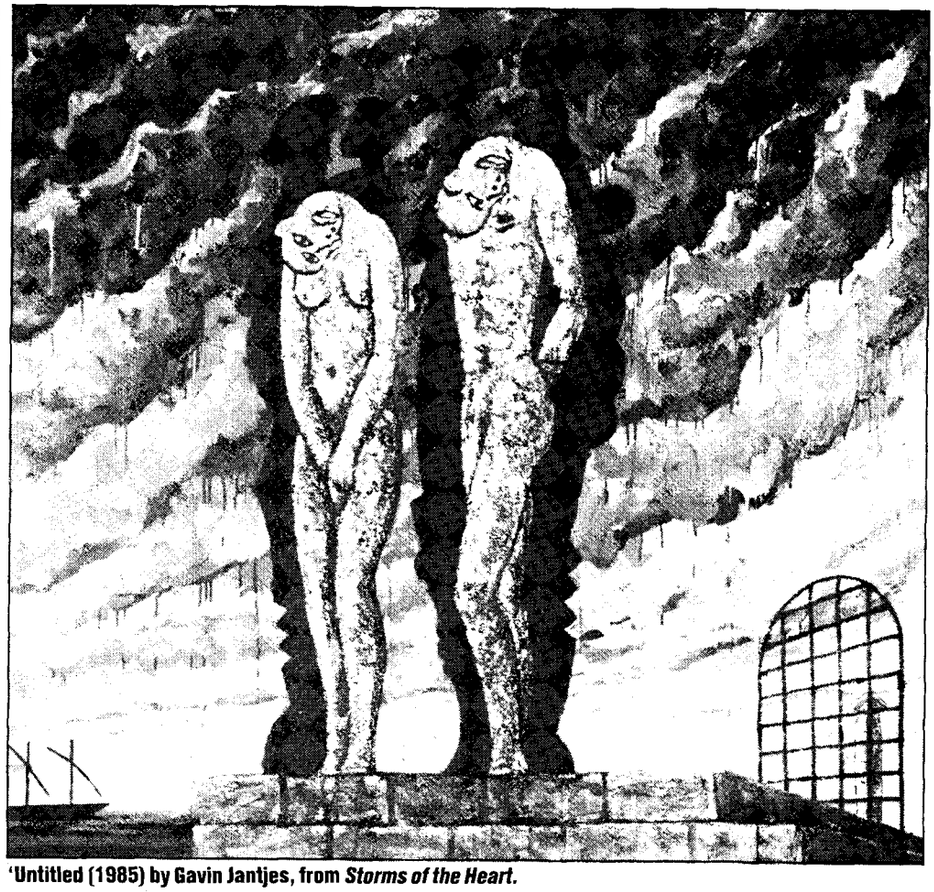

**'Untitled (1985) by Gavin Jantjes, from *Storms of the Heart*.**

scape, and the consequent struggle for political and aesthetic space. Some of the articles worry frustrations—from the refusal of British architecture courses to address the Islamic and African traditions to listings magazines locating classical South Asian dance under "folk". There is an excellent essay by Ben Okri on responses to Othello ("when a Black man is portrayed in the West as noble it usually means that he is neutralised"), and a witty and perceptive piece by David Dabydeen on Blacks in 18th century portraiture which in addition to analysing pictures dredges up a number of Georgian editorials warning against a "swarm" of Blacks which "if they be not suppress'd" will doubtless end up rather swamping a menaced population.

But the dominant theme is not historical but contemporary, and is the attempt to relate (and indeed define) contemporary British Black art to and in terms of its predominant historical characteristic. As Pratibha Parmar argues, "conscious and unconscious memories of migration and displacement" are central to the Black creative endeavour; "migrants all over the world are part of the modern world system and carry with them a legacy of loss and fragmentation".

But the truth that Black art is not *just* about loss is underlined again and again. For Pratibha Parmar the antidote to fragmentation is defiance, a defiance that (for Ntozade Shange) must confront "the dispersal and divisions of the slave systems" and consciously seek "to knock down state boundaries". And almost none of the nearly 40 contributors to *Storms of the Heart* calls for the defence of "pure" homeland traditions against pollution by the "host" culture; many criticise "ethnic" cultural politics not merely as divisive but essentially immobile and indeed paralysing. Thus, for Nadir Tharani, an aesthetic response to the South Asian experience of Britain does not necessarily imply the use of South Asian forms; if and when it does, then they "should be rooted in the social realities here".

The perception of the relationship between the immigrant and host cultures as essentially and inevitably dynamic as well as defiant is a theme of Owusu's own contributions; it was a dominant theme in *The Struggle for Black Arts in Britain*, and also informs his and Jacob Ross's beautifully produced volume of carnival essays and photographs. For, as Ross acknowledges, the origins of Afro-Caribbean carnival may well lie on the very cutting edge of the colonial experience, as slaves took over and parodied a festive form that began life with the imperial elite of French Trinidadian society (in very much the same way, of course, as European carnival takes the form of aristocratic pastiche—an upending of existing hierarchies most potently expressed in the medieval Feast of Fools).

The contradictions of medieval festivity are of course multiplied when those forms are transposed by industrialism to the cities; they are further intensified by the trauma of international migration. The ambiguity of that experience is the dialectic between loss and challenge, between the experience of the refugee and the pioneer. The title story in Jacob Ross's collection, *Songs for Simone*, culminates in its Grenadan heroine challenging her own sense of cultural displacement by leading a steelpan band in a vengefully spirited rendition of Beethoven's Minuet in G. Pure it ain't; dynamic it is.

# Powerlessness corrupts

**STARS OF THE NEW CURFEW**
**Ben Okri**
Secker & Warburg £10.95

*Suzanne Cronje*

In the title story of Ben Okri's book, *Stars of the New Curfew*, two local politicians, both millionaires, hold a crude contest for power. This consists of distributing money to the crowd. One of them produces an air-conditioned Rolls Royce with a large refrigerator which stores and cools his banknotes: "The fridge was brought on stage and the stacks of notes were unloosened from their bindings and thrown at the crowd." This goes on for a while, until the rival chief makes his counter-bid: "The helicopter hovered over us. Then a door opened and coins were emptied over us. No one moved for a while... The silvery sparkles floated down through the air like tangible stars... The coins rained on us as if it were our punishment for being below". In the end the crowd disperses: "We were the garbage carried away on the waves of mud." The torrential rain in the town misses the houses belonging to members of a secret cult.

The nightmarish setting of this scene may disguise the fact that it actually took place, money-helicopter and all, during Nigeria's 1983 election campaign—before the military rule so angrily denounced by Okri in this book. (I noted with some amusement in the Nigerian press the other day that the real-life tycoon who presumably inspired this tale continues with his "philantropic gestures" to win people's hearts, despite the present military government's ban on politics.)

With the possible exception of *What the Tapster Saw*, which is more allegorical than the rest, Okri's six stories are all "true" reflections on life in Nigeria. The first goes back to the Biafran war; the rest are set in the present; all are vivid and frightening. The love story, *When the Lights Return*, is like a guilt-ridden dream in which the heroine, white-clad Maria, is presented with Okri's consummate skill as the archetypal mistress of moral blackmail. In the


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background: the Lagos ghetto of Munshin, peopled with loathsome soldiers and a dead man who rises from a rubbish heap to preach revolt.

Okri's writing is suffused with helpless anger at the alienation of Nigerian society, the corruption not only of the rulers but also of the ruled who seem to connive at their own oppression. "The strongest fear in this town", one of his characters says, "is to be defenceless, to be without a powerful godfather, and therefore at the mercy of the drums. New starts are growing every day. They grow from the same powers, the same rituals..." The trouble with most people is that they cannot *see* the nature of the evil surrounding them. In *Worlds that Flourish*, the hero, a clerk who is sacked without apparent reason, leaves his job without bitterness and tells his neighbour he feels "fine". This is "because you go around as if you don't have any eyes", the neighbour says. But even vision does not protect you in Okri's Nigeria. When the ex-clerk begins to see, he flees the city in horror, to end up in the village of the dead. There he rediscovers his neighbour who has been killed by a soldier and who now displays *three* eyes.

*Stars of the New Curfew* is an important comment on Nigerian society. Only time will tell whether its unremitting pessimism is fully justified, but it leaves no doubt about Okri's passion and talent.

# Nigeria laughs at itself

**PRISONERS OF JEBS**
**Ken Saro-Wiwa**
Saros International £10.95

*Adewale Maja-Pearce*

*Prisoners of Jebs* is a collection of 53 sketches, first published as a weekly column between January 1986 and January 1987 in the Nigerian *Vanguard* newspaper. In the "Author's Note", Ken Saro-Wiwa tells us that he wanted his column to "examine weekly events in Nigeria", and to the extent that a knowledge of Nigerian politics of this period is helpful for an appreciation of many of the references, it is unlikely that the book will have much appeal to non-Nigerians.

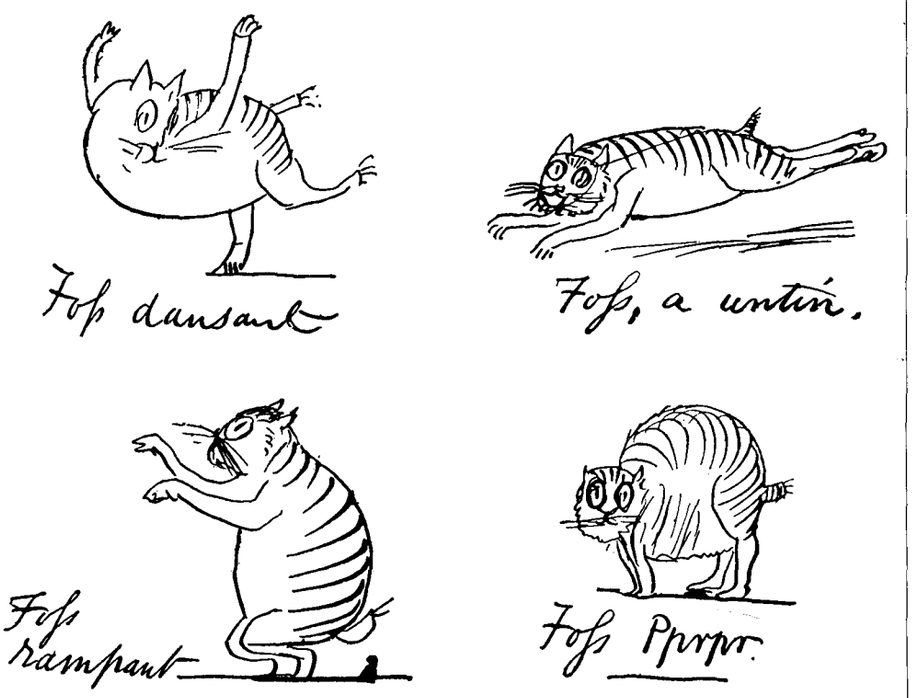
The scene is set in the first sketch, "The Building of the Prison", in which we are told that the Organisation of African Unity, celebrating its 25th anniversary, decide that "prisoners drawn from member-nations, locked up in a pollution-free environment and forced to think day and night about the problems of the continent... would certainly usher in progress". Nigeria is unanimously chosen as the site, and an off-shore prison, courtesy of the Dutch and the Bulgarians, is duly constructed.

This leaves the way for the kind of satire of Nigerian life that has now become the stock-in-trade of a number of inventive Nigerian journalists. Nigerians have never been slow to criticise their society; on the other hand, Nigerian society affords plenty of material: "The Nigerians had voted millions for the running of Jebs. The Nigerians always vote millions for the running of their institutions. And as is usual in Nigeria, Jebs' millions disappeared in no time. It was quite astounding, the ability of Nigeria's millions to perform the disappearing trick."

Or again: "In keeping with its reputation as Africa's most populous state, Nigeria had the most prisoners. And they were the loudest inmates. They showed off, broke all queues, played loud music, shouted at the top of their voices, refused to do manual labour, and ate and drank most."

Almost every Nigerian newspaper, of which there are an estimated 23 dailies and 29 weeklies, delights in this kind of social comment. This probably represents the nation's greatest hope: nobody can accuse Nigerians of being unable to laugh at themselves, a pre-requisite for fundamental social change.

Social satire of this kind also serves a useful function if you happen to be stuck in a car in Lagos during one of the legendary "go-slows" —the experience of anybody who has to go to work every day. Unfortunately, journalism rarely survives longer than the date on the newspaper. After the first half-dozen sketches in *Prisoners of Jebs* I found myself growing just a little weary, partly because the joke had worn a little thin, partly because the form itself precludes any development of character.




# Travels in Gromboolia

**THAT SINGULAR PERSON CALLED LEAR**
**Susan Chitty**
Weidenfeld & Nicolson £16.95

*Amanda Mitchison*

"How pleasant to know Mr Lear!" Well, at least how pleasant to meet him at a safe remove through a writer as widely travelled and almost as witty as her subject (even the acknowledgements are funny).

Lear is a gift to a biographer. Tubby, snub-nosed and whimsical, he led a long, varied life about which he wrote well and copiously. He also had famous and interesting friends who wrote. Most importantly, his character was a classic product of its age and yet also complicated and deeply unhappy in an individual way.

His childhood had all the dark and scroobious ingredients of the best Victorian tradition—parental estrangement, sexual shame, penury, and poor health. The 20th child of 21 children of an impecunious London stockbroker, he was brought up and haphazardly educated by elder sisters (Chitty's "monstrous regiment of petticoats"). At six he had his first epileptic fit (what he called "the Demon" and which for most of his life he believed was caused by masturbation) and at seven his first attack of black, nostalgic despair ("the Morbids"). At nine he was sexually abused and at 14 he was cast on to the street to earn his living.

Lear began his artistic career illustrating books of birds, and producing his own admirable collection of parrots. By his mid thirties he had collected patrons and was living in Rome as an established landscape painter. He was to spend most of the rest of his life living abroad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and travelling through the wilder parts of the Mediterranean ("The elements, trees, clouds, silence seem to have more part with me...than mankind"). He only returned to visit patrons, see his travel books through the press and visit friends, often at lugubrious house parties.

As a painter, Lear was only moderately successful. He told Holman Hunt, "My pictures can never be perfect. They are born with one leg shorter than t'other."

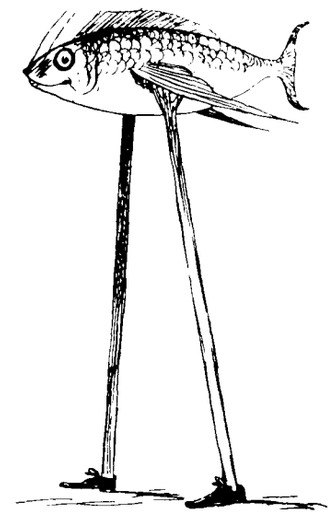
While the paintings Lear slaved over were soon forgotten, the nonsense rhymes and scrawly drawings that tripped artlessly off his pen have lived in perpetuity. (They were also popular during his lifetime, but, typically, he received no public recognition. On a train he was once forced to show the name tag on his hat to convince a fellow passenger that Edward Lear was not a pen name for the Earl of Derby.)

In love as in work, Lear barked up the wrong tree and was unrequited. A brief interlude of happiness in Lear's not very happy life occured in 1849 when the middle aged painter visited Greece with Franklin Lushington ("a golden youth of twenty six"). For Chitty, this was the pivotal point in Lear's life, and she opens the book with an account of the trip. As a result of this rearrangement, the biography makes the rest of Lear's life seem a tragic afterthought—precisely how it would have seemed to him.

However, the biography also includes many examples of Lear at his funniest—complaining about food, people, and the discomforts of travel. He is excellent on the ghastliness of lodgings: the hotel cistern from where "horrible, squashfibolios meligoposhsquilous sounds were heard", an Albanian khan "called khans because you khant sleep in them" where he shared a pillow with 15 ducks "each looking at me with one eye, seeming to wish I was made of barley and duckweed."

Chitty culls the best from the letters and journals of Lear and his contemporaries. His reflexive wit enriches her prose just as his nonsense botany has added to the English garden such gems as Piggiawiggia Pyramidalis (a bluebell of piglets) and Nasticreechia Krorluppia (a lupin-shaped affair made of caterpillars). Lear also gave "runcible", and "grangrongous" to the English language and, if someone else hadn't got there first, he would have dreamt up "antimacassar" and "cummerbund." (No doubt in tacit recognition of this fact, he wrote a poem about the lady of Bulbul where the cummerbund plays the role of the jabberwock in Lewis Carroll's poem.)

The problem with Chitty's biography is that she has squeezed the juice out of Lear *too* well. Like all good literary commentary, the biography sends the reader back to the original texts. But, after Chitty had already used up many of the best bits, I found Lear's nonsense thin and also very sad. The lovelorn Yonghy-Bonghy-Bo, and the inadequate Dongs and Pobbles seem glaringly autobiographical. When the ill-matched Mr Daddy Long-legs and Mr Floppy Fly elope to the Gromboolian plain, I was left wondering which was Lushington and which was Lear.



The Fizzgiggious Fish,
who always walked about upon Stilts,
because he had no legs.

The Absolutely Abstemious Ass,
who resided in a Barrel, and only lived on
Soda Water and Pickled Cucumbers.

# Fictional truth

**A SCRAP OF TIME**
**Ida Fink, translated from the Polish by Madeline Levine and Francine Prose**
Peter Owen £9.95

*Richard Deveson*

This is how one of the most poignant stories in *A Scrap of Time* begins: "That summer I happened to be travelling on a line I rarely take. It was a local route punctuated with frequent stops, and the passenger train lumbered slowly and noisily through the monotonous countryside. Occasionally it ran alongside a forest, but mostly it kept stopping at villages and small towns with unfamiliar names..." We are in Poland, in the late 1940s, but as the story proceeds, and a man and woman in elegant city clothes board the train at a tiny halt in the middle of an open field, and the woman begins to weep, we feel that we could be in a story by Chekhov set 40 years earlier, or indeed that we could be almost anywhere in an Eastern Europe long lost in history and war and death. But the story is not poignant from nostalgia: we know, because all the stories in this book carry the same warning, that it is going to lead up to a harrowing revelation. The man with greying hair and the woman with skin-tight shoes are going to tell us their own story of the Holocaust.

Ida Fink was born in Poland in 1921 and spent the years between 1942 and 1945 in a ghetto and in hiding; she now lives in Israel, though she writes in Polish. These stories are not about the death camps, but about the hours or minutes before the SS arrives; they are about girls on a work detail in the woods, having lunch among bluebells while their elders are being shot in fields a few kilometres away; they are about people hiding in hay lofts or pigsties and about the unendurable choices which parents have to make concerning their chidrèn. Some of the stories are macabre: a black wolf-like dog escorts a child from one hiding-place to another and then vanishes; a woman walks into a pond at dusk. Others are lightly touched with symbolism, as when a Jewish boy tells a Gentile girl his survivor's story, only to see that she has slept through it, or when a group of peasants is outraged to discover that a convoy of lorries transporting Jews to an "action" has run over a pig.

The comparison with Chekhov is irresistible on two counts. Ida Fink can evoke a landscape or an interior or a mood in just a few quiet words: the Polish anonymity of forest and pond and peasant's hut; the house of an old half-mad teacher of French, with "the little desk under the window, the worn volume from Larousse, the gilded binding of *Letters From My Windmill*. And the smell of mould from the dark room"; a beautiful clear morning when the men of the town are rounded up, "a grainy golden mist with red spheres of apples hanging in it, and the shadows above the river damp with the sharp odour of burdock, and the bright blue dress that I was wearing when I left the house..." And, even more admirably, her stories are entirely free of the sentimentality and the grandiose mythicising that too often mars writing about the destruction of the Jews. She writes directly, gently and with a scrupulous Chekhovian regard for truth.

Truth, after all, is what we require from writers attempting to describe these terrible events; fiction, which is another name for untruth, inevitably arouses our mistrust, at the very least. And yet Ida Fink's stories, all based on events that actually happened, demonstrate magnificently that truth-telling, too, must and can be done with artistry, and they perhaps even demonstrate that art and truth remain indivisible.



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*Design*

# Good offices

*The business design industry wants to upgrade the image of the office. Carl Gardner and Michael Poole report on moves to make us more work-centred.*

**Jonathan Ross at Top Office '88**

Most people's office fantasy involves leaving work at five o'clock and never coming back. Desk-top fantasies of a very different kind, bringing together those eighties obsessions work, leisure and style were on offer at the Top Office '88 event, held at the Business Design Centre in Islington last week. Hard on the heels of films such as *Wall Street* and TV series like *LA Law*, here was a further instalment in the story of how white-collar work became sexy—aka how we learned to stop worrying and love the service economy.

The event was a contrived attempt to add a little media glitz to the almost invisible, but economically significant sector of business design (the office equipment industry alone is worth a cool £13 billion a year). To this end the exhibition featured five "fantasy offices" specially designed for a clutch of well-known business and media personalities—Professor Roland Smith, chief executive of British Aerospace; George Davies of the Next empire; TV's Jonathan Ross and Janet Street-Porter; and food writer Prue Leith.

Covering all bases, the organisers had invited Princess Anne to open the event. But even though sister-in-law Di had been stomping the same boards two weeks earlier for the New Designers show, it proved to be a casting error. New and old celebrities don't mix. The photographers simply stampeded past the real-thing royal to get a shot of the media pretender Ross in his "American detective-style" office.

Not surprisingly either, it was Ross and fellow TV professional Street-Porter, who commanded the most interesting designers, Landini and Ritchie from Fitch & Co, and Rashid Din from Din Associates, respectively. Poor old foodie, Prue Leith, got lumbered with a job lot of systems furniture in pretty pastel colours, topped by a nauseating floral frieze, emblazoned with a culinary heraldic device, comprising plastic plate, knife and fork and a badly drawn fish. It screamed femininity and fussy functionalism—the ultimate insult was the en suite, fully-fitted melamine kitchen. A real triumph of design creativity, this one.

Jonathan Ross's "office" was tellingly fashioned as a passable imitation of a padded cell. With walls lined in quilted padding from floor to ceiling, and concealed doors, this was a totally enclosed, protected world—the media bubble incarnate. Just the job for banging your head against as a last resort when the show's star guest cries off at ten minutes notice. This ironic ensemble was completed by TV monitors playing video loops of a fish-tank scene. Or should that be a goldfish bowl? The Beuys-own retreat was furnished with an eclectic mix of retro thirties furniture by Marlowe out of Sam Spade and assorted media motifs, such as antique radios, phones, jukeboxes, tabloid newspapers on hooks and satellite dish-shaped speakers high on the walls. And when he gets tired of media simulation, outside there's a tiny casting-couch ante-room, adorned with pix of Samantha Fox



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and George Michael. Ross himself is beginning to resemble a latter-day Simon Dee, the boyish good looks rapidly fading into night-club pastiness. Yet post-modern television's first hero clearly relished the way half the room was in quote marks, and could be heard muttering about it all being "a brilliant design idea not a working space". It didn't seem to occur to anyone that the joke might be on him.

The joke was certainly on Janet Street-Porter. Her fantasy office took a cue from the stripped-down aesthetics of *Network 7*, the ground-breaking series she produced for C4. Anodised zinc walls and unpainted steel filing systems decked out as ersatz books (not a big reader, Janet), provide a perfect habitat for a naked TV set, tube exposed and mounted on the wheels of a cannibalised supermarket trolley.

This high-tech primitivism merged into a kind of chic medievalism—what else to make of a quite bizarre wood-and-rope bondage couch or the rusting, antique six-inch nails carefully strewn about? A critique of the ruthlessness of television as an industry? Or do they know something about J S-P we don't?

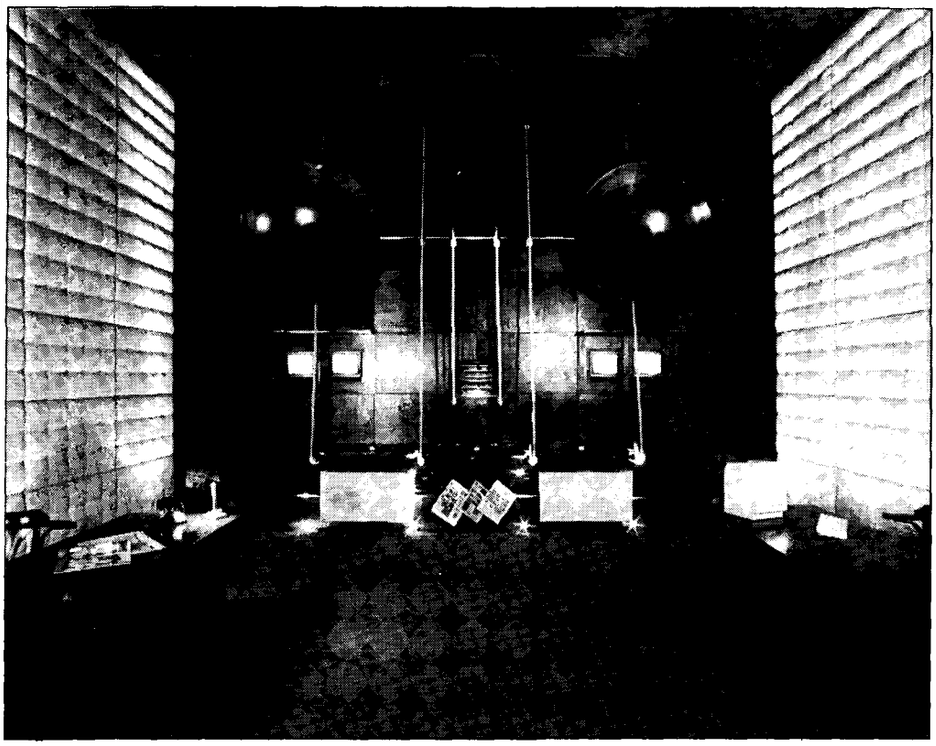
Prof Smith's working den, created by W J White, was by some way the most depressing exhibit—here was the environmental equivalent of "power dressing". Reeking of plush new carpets (perhaps they could market the smell of three-inch deep Axminster?), swamped in acres of dark, heavy veneer, bristling with gold-plated uplighters and tasteful statuary, and finished off with the compulsory draped curtains, this was a design cliche waiting for someone conservative enough, and rich enough, to make it happen. An office, that like British business itself, took no risks.

Interesting that in the age of meritocratic, entrepreneurial Thatcherism, the designers should have summoned up the idiom of a pre-war gentleman's club as the style most appropriate to one of Britain's top businessmen—an eloquent testimony to British industry's indifference to contemporary, innovative design.

On this count, George Davies is innocent, OK? The retail business has been ardently parading its deep devotion to design on the high street for several years now, and if Conran is widely regarded as its Pope, Davies is definitively its high priest. The Business Design Group's creation for the Next millionaire, reflected this guru status in a setting which was almost chapel-like in form, even down to the desk as high altar, mounted on an austere, wooden dais, the waist-high lectern (the man works standing up) and the tall, curved, ecclesiastical windows flanking one wall. Beyond the windows was a small, cramped garden (yes, garden)—the closest this self-styled workaholic is ever likely to come to nature in the raw. On a clear day, as he sits at his desk, narrows his eyes, glimpses the greenery and sniffs the floral perfume, he could almost imagine he was communing with the real thing. This gauche piece of designer pastoralism (which included the import of a rotten, peeling country bench-seat) was symptomatic of a wider trend at the show: the collapsing of work into leisure. Top people never go home.

The question is: will the rest of us learn to love our offices as much? The answer is almost certainly: yes. Design has already played a major part in making us more work-centred. Think of the way the eighties turned the filofax—basically a piece of clerical equipment—into a fashion accessory. The message of Top Office '88 is unequivocally that work is good for you, good for your image and good for Britain. Have a nice day.

**For the man who has everything: padded cell or media bubble?**



# MEDIATIONS

*In Two Minds*, screened last Thursday in the BBC's brilliant David Mercer retrospective, was a very "sixties" study of schizophrenia, much informed by the writer's friendship with RD Laing. By my reckoning it was the first-ever all-film television drama.

Until 1967 the BBC had been prevented from making single "plays" entirely on celluloid by a union agreement guaranteeing at least a minimum amount of studio sequences (shot on video) in any drama. Ironically, this was the period when television was regularly being accused of killing off cinema. With the advent of telefilms like *In Two Minds* (later remade for cinema as *Family Life*) a new refrain began to be heard: British cinema is alive and well and living on television. Since the launch of C4's *Film On Four* and ITV and BBC's rejoinders in the form of new film subsidiaries and subsidies (the Beeb even put up money for the awful but awfully successful *White Mischief*) that refrain needs rephrasing. In the late eighties what passes for British cinema lives *off* television.

Just last month, for instance, Nelson Entertainment, an American video company, quietly released a rather ordinary film here called *Little Sweetheart*. *Sweetheart* is another first, the BBC's first-every theatrical release throughout the world. Apart, that is, from the UK, where union agreements still restrict the corporation's films to the small screen.

I'm in two minds about this myself with part of me guiltily grateful to union intransigence as a last bastion against the mid-Atlantic/mid-channel and intermedia(te) status of so many TV movies. If British television's claims to be the best in the world meant anything at all it was *as television* and not as either surrogate theatre or surrogate cinema.

Last week's International Television Studies Conference was the sort of event where analysis of the "ontology of television" wouldn't have been out of place. Broadcasters, though—and even media journalists—were thin on the ground just as fewer and fewer academics attend the industry's own chat show, the Edinburgh Television Festival.

This is a pity: the ITSC included papers on the future of public service broadcasting, the threat to C4, case studies of the international impact of cable and satellite and even the unions themselves. Just those subjects, that is, which the broadcasters themselves will be discussing at Edinburgh in August. But the organisers of both events seem satisfied with this mutual isolation. So, I imagine, are those only too eager to do away with public service broadcasting and media studies.

Paul Kerr



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*Commercials*

# I slink, therefore I am

*John Lyttle on why advertising has discovered the femme fatale*

Contrary to popular belief, the orally compulsive blonde in the Cadbury's Flake commercials is not a *femme fatale*. She is far too much a creation of the sixties for that. *Femme fatales* don't suck—they bite, and they are a product of late eighties sexual paranoia.

Hollywood's fatal attraction has become advertising's latest aspirational icon, an ideal of class and cash, targeted at young affluent ABC1s, and used to sell everything from shaving gel to yoghurt.

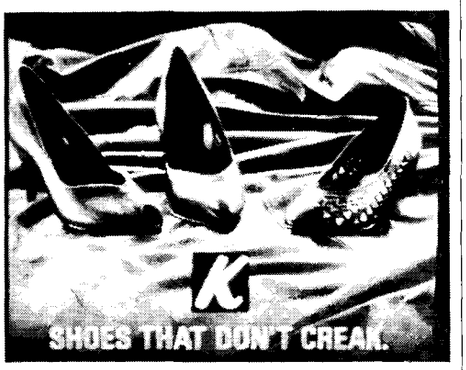
The remodelled reappearance of the *femme fatale* from her forties heyday makes a bizarre sort of sense. Lean, mean and modern, the deadly "other" is the perfect, and perfectly obvious, stereotype for a paranoid decade frightened of the zipless fuck but fixated with attitude, wealth and airbrushed surface. "I slink, therefore I am" is likewise a motto to match the latest fashion dictates which, viewed with a squint, seem a bible for the budding FF: white skin, sullen look, tight corset, black costume.

The Pirelli *Double Indemnity* update places the scheming FF at the narrative core, slicing the brake cables on her husband's (performance) car. Gillette goes as far as to list her among a man's possessions (under the heading of "cat"). The far more explicit Ski-Cool campaign plays on hard gaze (he) and enigmatic glance (she), cutting from the "trigger" of a plastic kettle being pulled to an archetypal Eve plunging into a pool; the voiceover informs us she has been "put out of her misery". Kiss kiss, bang bang.

Advertising's fetishistic use of women's bodies is hardly hot news. What's new is the emphasis on what Joan Braderman's video deconstruction of *Dynasty*'s Alexis—the prototype eighties FF— calls "putting the blame on Mame".

The most glaring example of this was phase two of the Government's Aids campaign. The figure luring men to disease and doom was glossy of lip and smooth of thigh: death as an assertive career woman wearing black tights. Not so, argues Jeremy Whitehead of McCormick Publicists, until recently the Pirelli account holders. Whitehead believes the new breed of *femme fatale* "is a post-feminist role...it's about strength, looking good, independence, being smart".

Hardly the standard description of a would-be murderess. Yet Whitehead is surely right to call the FF "the vogue of the moment". Paul Mathur, writing in *Blitz* magazine, pinpoints a wider trend: "It's OK to be seen to be using your sexuality now...and for a variety of products".




**The K shoes campaign: subverting stereotypes with a little help from a bowl of spaghetti**

He also buys the view that the expensively adorned plaything is a power-dressed evolution of the seventies "liberated" woman.

If so, the FF accommodates any number of current cultural contradictions. If she is woman-in-charge, a viewpoint offered by various advertising agencies, then that control is wrought solely through social advancement, the accumulation of shoulder pads and cash. A poor FF would be a tramp, hardly a fitting decorative partner for the upwardly mobile new men most of these ads are aimed at.

Mark Edwards of *Media Week* thinks "the woman is mostly there to prove that the man isn't gay", citing the Lowenbrau commercial which manages to sneak-flash a photograph of a glamorous woman even though she plays no part in the unfolding script. Edwards suggests the FF offers the opportunity to negate the supposedly strict rules regarding the depiction of sex in television advertising: "women sell things. They think by allowing a woman to be threatening, it's progress."

Kay Scorah, programme consultant on *Whiter than White*, the BBC's forthcoming series on the social history of British advertising, takes the opposite tack. Profitability, not progress, is the key. "I'm sure the advertising agencies have been claiming today's woman is now so liberated and so funny she doesn't mind a joke and these things are not to be taken literally...yes?" Yes. Scorah's own position as an advertising professional leads her to conclude that "young males have a real fear of competitive women. There's a genuine backlash against powerful working women. The *femme fatale* puts women back into an acceptable 'dangerous' stereotype the way some men would like to see women back in the home. There are very few women in advertising in real positions of influence. If there were, many of the specious arguments about the use of certain female images wouldn't have the currency they enjoy."

Yet the current K-Shoes advertisement aimed exclusively at women seeks to subvert expectations. The clothes, make-up and *de rigueur* stiletto heels bespeak tired suspense, by rote eroticism and exhausted, unimaginative desire; but every element is detonated by the simple act of depositing a bowlful of spaghetti on the cheating head of the beloved.

Perhaps the brains behind the beast do understand that the only way women will swallow the bait is to dress it as it really is—as a rather bad joke.

*Comics*

# Barrio culture

*Mark Sinker on the gender-bending work of two hispanic-American cartoonists*

The way to make money on adult comic books in the late eighties is to put the monthly issues together into glossy compilations and sell them as "graphic novels". The new market can avoid the wait and has its literary ego stroked a little, too.

But comics aren't novels and novels aren't comics. So it's appropriate that a character in Gilbert "Beto" Hernandez's strip *Heartbreak Soup*—from the comic *Love & Rockets*, written and drawn by Gilbert and his brother Jaime—is seen discussing *One Hundred Years Of Solitude* in a faintly pretentious way only a short while before his wife throws him and the book out of their house.

*Heartbreak Soup* is in fact one of the few extended strips where the comparison with the novel (in particular the magic realist novel) really makes much sense. But the brothers' heightened punk sensibility is important in its own right, a spearhead of a new wave of comic books.

*Heartbreak Soup* is set in a mythical (Mexican?) village called Palomar and spans a 30-year period in the life of the community, an ironic weave of sex and death and other mysteries, the



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affairs, feuds and obsessions of the villagers. *Love & Rockets*, its companion strip, is set in the *barrio* district of an unnamed Californian(?) city and focuses on a small group of hispanic punk girl teenagers, their blurred gender identification and doomed communal idealism.

Thanks to an overlong love affair with detectives, caped crusaders and other lawless lawbringers, comics will always be associated with explicit violence and sublimated sex. What makes *Love & Rockets* so remarkable is the casual way in which this has been reversed, almost feminised. Men aren't central to either strip. In *Heartbreak Soup*, they're dominated (even terrorised) by a community of tough, smart, highly sexual women. In *Love & Rockets*, Maggie Chascarrillo (a romantic with a weight problem) and Hopey Glass (a barely reformed delinquent) are occasional lovers, in classically punky fashion: more or less disinterested, except when they're not.

On one hand, there's the cross-border contrast between a dislocated and poverty-stricken modern third world community and a marginal refusenik subculture in a deteriorating capitalist society. On the other, there's a fascinating tension being worked up between a sterotypical hispanic worldview—think of the origins of the word 'macho'—and the brothers' charged and complex vision of changing sexual norms. The US punk underground continues to be fairly healthily radical in its attitudes to sexual equality—it's the hispanic spin the picture's given here that makes it so compelling, a distinctly un-WASP social coding.

AW, C'MON, CARMEN HONEY! I PROMISE I WON'T READ WHEN I'M WITH YOU ANY MORE...
HERACLIO, THIS IS THE LAST TIME YOU'RE GOING TO IGNORE ME FOR THIS JUNK!

**"Love and Rockets" doomed communal idealism**

The hispanic community in the United States will soon be the largest ethnic minority. It's surely no accident that the most innovative and perceptive of the new American comics comes from the heart of a rising culture. And—compared to the novels of Marquez, for example—it's unlikely to be absorbed and neutralised by any elitist literary establishment.

*Titan Books has issued four compilation volumes of the Hernandez's work "Love and Rockets", "The Lost Women", "Heartbreak Soup" and "Duck Feat" (£5.95 each).*


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*Music*

# Spanglish speaking

*Stuart Cosgrove on the market forces behind the rise of hispanic popular culture*

Last week, from the back row of a Soho cinema, I caught a glimpse of the future of pop and it was repulsive. There is no more desperate sight than multinational capitalism in search of a new audience.

*Salsa: The Movie* is a hispanic rendition of *Saturday Night Fever* featuring improbable dance sequences choreographed to the point of absurdity and set to the music of Tito Peunte and Ruben Blades. It has apparently raked in $8.7 million since its US release in May and has rekindled the flame of expectation that surrounded last year's hispanic pop movie *La Bamba*.

The influence of Spanish-speaking communities has exploded into America's cultural mainstream, creating a new upsurge in music and the visual arts. The otherwise conservative *Time* magazine recently greeted the new hispanic spirit with unusual gusto: the cover simply said *Magnifico*!

But behind the cultural excitement lies a market waiting to be exploited. There are 19 million hispanics now living in America and by the year 2000 their number will have swelled to 30 million—or 15 per cent of the lucrative US market.

The range of hispanic-influenced music currently on sale is as diverse as a *barrio* nightclub. Traditional salsa stars like Celia Cruz , who at 70 still cuts an impressive and infectious figure, sell records to every age group. But the newer hispanic dance forms, Latino hip-hop, the Miami sound and the dubiously named Spanglish Pop, are aimed at teenagers.

The success of hispanic rhythms has inevtiably spread to the pop mainstream. Linda Ronstadt, backed by the Mariachi Vargas de Tecalitan Band, has enjoyed unexpected success with *Canciones de Mi Padre*, a collection of Mexican folk-songs celebrating the childhood of her father. And, always with one eye on the next liberal junket, Paul Simon has left the clumsy diplomacy of *Graceland* behind and is working on his new album in Rio with a group of local Brazilian musicians.

British record labels, particularly diligent independents like the reissue specialists Charly, have identified a growing European interest in hispanic sounds. They have recently bought the back catalogue of the definitive salsa label Fania and one of their current compilation LPs *Dance To The Latin Beat* is obligatory listening for aficionados of latin-jazz.

Lisa-Lisa Velez, a Puerto Rican from New York's Hell's Kitchen whose album *Spanish Fly*

**Salsa: the repulsive future of pop?**

sold more than two million copies last year, begins a new nationwide tour next week. Billed as the hispanic Madonna, Lisa-Lisa is music to the ears of a recording industry that published a recent marketing survey which claimed that Spanish-speaking Americans wield a spending power of $134 billion.

Inevitably, pop music picked up on the trend, realising that simple use of a Spanish hook-line could open a record up to a new market. Lionel Richie's *All Night Long* and Dennis Edwards' *Don't Look Any Further* pioneered the use of strategic Spanish, then Madonna followed suit with *La Isla Bonita* and with all the imagination of a cheap tourist guide the mandarins of the major labels had a new policy: give us your money *por favore*!

The undisputed queen of Spanglish pop is Gloria Estifin, lead singer of The Miami Sound Machine whose current album *Let It Loose* (Epic) includes a join-the-dots pop record "1-2-3". It's almost as crass as "Congo", the 1985 single that blended drunken party tunes and salsa into a hybrid of inner-city music now known for obvious reasons as Miami Sound.

In simple statistical terms, the new market for hispanic pop is massively tempting for overlooked musicians who have had to live in the shade of lesser talents. But music in the late eighties works according to elusive rules. The theory of disposability and the rush of pleasure which governs mass-marketed pop music has little to do with the "urbane authenticity" which guides people towards African music or the sounds of the Panamanian singer-songwriter Ruben Blades. In an attempt to court a wider audience, Blades recorded his first English album *Nothing But The Truth* and invited Sting and Elvis Costello along to give it an even higher profile. It sold modestly and has been indifferently received by the fans who adored his earlier Spanish releases. Proof perhaps that compromise rarely pays.

The hispanic sounds of salsa, merengue and Latino hip-hop broaden, complicate and enrich the textures of music, taking the anglophonic traditions of rock and pop into a new cosmopolitan future. But the hispanic rush is governed by market forces rather than any sense of musical intensity.

Hispanic crossover success has created bigger audiences but massively reduced sensibilities. As the beat becomes increasingly international, taking spice from Cuba, Miami, Mexico and New York, the magical lyricism of Central American culture has collapsed into instantly recognisable buzz-words. The music of Celia Cruz has all the nuances and dialectics of a lived language but Gloria Estifin sounds like a TEFL course with a disco beat.

On the surface, the rise of Spanglish pop may mean an increase in the flow of cultural traffic but it's equally likely to degenerate into a new pop banality. Spanish-speaking artists and producers have rightly laid claim to their piece of the action, but as the marketplace multiplies, the relationships of pop production remain intact. Pop's main mode of address in the nineties will be a pack of badly shuffled cultural cards with CBS holding the aces. Salsa will have its moment but the Spanish-speaking communities from Bolivia to the Bay Area *barrios* will remain on the wrong end of gringo economics.

*Film & TV*

# Paragons of paranoia

*Jonathan Saunders on a season of epidemic proportions*

If Aids did not exist, the media would have had to invent it. And, in a way, it has. The dramatic and symbolic devices of what, I suppose, we can call disease narratives (including documentaries) have constructed the "Aids" of public consciousness. The National Film Theatre's enterprising August season **Panic in the Streets** (3-15 August) will chart this process through the history of cinema and TV fictions about epidemics, showing how recent examples have adapted earlier themes, language and imagery, especially in the genres of horror and melodrama. These conventions have even been employed in the much-televised Government Aids ads (such as the gothic/apocalyptic "Volcano"); although these paragons of paranoia are not scheduled for the season, their cinema counterpart will be shown. Bob Geldof's warning that "Aids is fucking



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**Plague as punishment in Elia Kazan's "Panic in the Streets"**

dangerous" reflects an important theme of epidemic cinema: sex as an intensifier of threat and fear.

Elia Kazan's 1950 noir melodrama *Panic in the Streets* opens the season on Wednesday. Set in New Orleans dockland, it concerns an outbreak of pneumonic plague, brought into the country by an illegal alien who is murdered after a card game. The killers are also the plague "carriers", repeatedly imaged like skulking rats. The search for them takes the forces of white middle-class authority through the criminal underworld and working-class and immigrant communities (the film endorses a suspicion of "foreigners"). The police eventually join forces with a government health officer in a secretive and highly authoritarian programme of contact tracing; infected interviewees are denied anti-plague serum until they cooperate. The contagion is finally eliminated, the coda stressing a return to "healthy" normality.

A clutch of "Aids era" horror movies vary some of these themes. *Day of the Dead* highlights the conflict between doctors and the Army in a world where the diseased are zombies who vastly outnumber and constantly threaten the healthy. It also touches on the notion of plague as divine punishment. The intolerably stupid *Lifeforce* concerns a virus (with a two-hour incubation period) transmitted by a seductive female vampire as she draws energy from healthy men. Cronenberg's *The Fly*, widely interpreted via Aids, also emphasises the dangers of contagion through sex, holding up a magnifying mirror to fears about sexuality, body fluids, disease, disfigurement and death.

It's unfortunate that a 1945 example of the genre, Val Lewton's complex and dourly beautiful plague movie *Isle of the Dead*, has been omitted from the season. One of the themes it anticipates is the invisibility of contagion, which is taken to extremes in *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (the 1978 re-make will be shown) when bodies are duplicated and replaced by an alien force. Here, the authorities—except one public health officer—are quickly consumed by the epidemic. The same happens in the opening episodes of BBC's 1975 serial *Survivors*, which uses the extreme situation of a global epidemic of killer flu to highlight the ignorance, dependency and materialism of the middle-class.

A similar project informs a more recent TV serial; 1987's *Intimate Contact* is a crudely didactic drama about the redemption-through-suffering of a bourgeois heterosexual family

*Sex as an intensifier of threat and fear is a central theme in epedemic cinema*

blighted by Aids. Its patriarch contracts HIV by "poking some dirty little tart" (confirmed by a lurid flashback) on a business trip in New York—also the setting of *Fatal Attraction* with which the first episode is double-billed. Another pairing links the rarely-seen 1950 fatal illness tearjerker *No Sad Songs For Me* (the last film of its suicidal star Margaret Sullavan) with the BBC play *Sweet as You Are*, about a Hampstead marriage threatened by Aids when the faithless husband is diagnosed anti-body positive.

A much earlier family melodrama, Nicholas Ray's brilliantly incisive *Bigger than Life* (1956) prefigures the theme of the father whose rare disease (via the side-effects of the drug prescribed for it) threatens his wife and child. Earlier still—in fact, the oldest film in the season—is the 1924 SF rarity *The Last Man on Earth* in which all men save one are killed by a strange disease called "masculitis"; our hero survives through his commitment to monogomy. By 1940, when *Dr Ehrlich's Magic Bullet* was made, the Hays Code was in operation, compromising this Warner Brothers biopic of the scientist who developed a cure for syphilis. If this reminds us that, a century ago, syphilis was a common and often fatal sexually transmissible disease—inspiring a range of theatrical dramas from Ibsen's symbolic *Ghosts* to didactic ephemera—we must also remember that Aids, in many of its characteristics, is very different. The season will highlight a continuity of representation and attitudes, not links between actual (or fictitious) diseases.

While heterosexual melodramas stress the disintegration of fragile families, *Buddies* reflects the unification of American gay men as their communities are decimated by Aids. It immediately undercuts the symbolism of contagion, characterising a man with Aids as a vital human being who has strong feelings, opinions and sexual desires. Another gay movie *Parting Glances*, though less coherent, wittily parodies fictions (including *Don Giovanni*) about retribution for sexual sins, and criticises silly and selfish responses to disease. In these films, and the superb New Zealand production *A Death in the Family*—to be shown in the NFT's autumn lesbian and gay season—the fictional treatment of Aids contains the warmth, concern, honesty and humour that it needs.

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*Cinema*

# Mad and bad

## *Suzanne Moore on psycho-jargon, satire and the melting pot*

One glance at the poster and you know that you're in for a bit of enforced wackiness: "If you're off your rocker, round the twist, with a few screws loose...you're ready for *The Couch Trip*". **The Couch Trip** is a comedy starring ex-*Saturday Night Live*-er Dan Ackroyd. The choice of psychiatry as its object of ridicule proves to be a rather soft option since it is already popularly considered to be something of a joke.

Ackroyd plays John Burns, a lovable rogue who has committed a lovable kind of crime—computer hacking—and who is pretending to be a loony in order to escape prison and remain in the "Mental Facility". This gives Ackroyd a chance to go through a sub-Jack Nicholson in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* routine, being charmingly disruptive until he manages to escape.

Impersonating the dullard Dr Baird, he manages to become the stand-in for Dr Maitlin—a popular radio sex-therapist who is himself having a nervous breakdown. Burns doles out a mixture of straight-talk spiced with just enough psycho-babble to make the ratings soar. And this being Hollywood we get the compulsorily gooey social comment, viz: that the people running mental institutions should be in them, that what most of us need is not therapy but a game of baseball, and that (yawn) psychiatry itself acts as a straitjacket immobilising the more imaginative forces of society.

The humour of *The Couch Trip* works precisely by weaving together two quite disparate strands of the shrink business. The first is the containing and regulating power of the psychiatric institution run by repressed and repressive authoritarians. The second is the centrality to American culture of therapy as an indulgent and expensive form of cosmetic surgery for the psyche. Thus the worst problem of one of the private patients Burns treats is that of a power-struggle with her maid.

Conflating psycho-jargon with the "liquid cosh" kind of psychiatry obscures the reality which is that they are moving further apart. While money may buy you love or psychoanalysis, less and less psychiatric patients are actually offered any kind of therapy at all. So when Burns offers free therapy it's not surprising that thousands turn up. As part of what he calls "mass transit therapy" he ushers them into buses: "Premature ejaculators here, schizophrenics over there, nymphomaniacs with me", he yells through a megaphone.

The power of psychiatry depends, of course, on these rigid classifications and on the way that we label ourselves—as well as being labelled. The truly scary thing is not simply the existence of these labels but the way they are being broken down into finer and finer sub-divisions, so that eventually all of us belong to a category requiring specialised "help".

*The Couch Trip* doesn't delve that far: it belongs to a brand of humour which mistakes shouting, combined with a few mildly anti-social acts, for subversion. But all the contrived craziness in the world can't give it the cutting edge that would turn it into inspired lunacy.

There can't be too many films that come with a blessing, let alone one from the Reverend Jesse Jackson, but **School Daze**—the new Spike Lee film—does. Unfortunately, even Jackson's prayer hasn't done the trick. *School Daze*, despite its huge energy, is a messy picture—full of conflicting styles that never pull together. The miniscule budget of *She's Gotta Have It* forced Lee to pare the film right down to its essentials, which he did in a fresh and stylish way. Given over $6 million for *School Daze* he no longer seems so sure of what those essentials are, and so bungs in everything just in case.

**Feigned looniness: Walter Matthau, Donna Dixon and Dan Ackroyd in "The Couch Trip"**

Given the almost total absence of all-black productions, it's no wonder that there's a lot of ground to cover. *School Daze* veers between an *Animal House* satire on college fraternities and their sadistic rituals, showbizzy musical interludes and naturalistic scenes dealing with social issues.

Lee is a consistently interesting film-maker, however, and although *School Daze* may not "work" as a whole, these conflicting styles echo the differences that he highlights within the black community itself: differences of class between college-educated blacks and the resentful locals, of skin-tone and aspiration between the Wannabees (Wannabe white) and the darker-skinned Jigaboos, and those between a radical black consciousness and a more pragmatic move-on-up politics—"I come from Motown, not Africa". This explosion of differences and their disconcerting refusal to be assimilated into one position runs counter to the usual portrayal of black people as an homogenous mass.

**Spicy Rice**, on the other hand, a small but moving film about the plight of illegal immigrants in Hamburg—offers a more comfortable melting-pot version of racial differences where Africans, Chinese and Pakistanis are all one happy family and immigration officials are the clear-cut baddies. Judging by critical reaction to both films, this is a vision all us white liberals find far easier to deal with.



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**VOLUNTEER NOTICE BOARD is a free service provided by New Statesman & Society with financial assistance from Thames Television's Help programme. Interested organisations are invited to send their copy (approximately 45 words) to Brian Cushion at New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London, E2 8DQ. Please note that this service is for recruiting volunteers only. If you have salaried vacancies contact the Classified Department on 01-739-1645.**

**APPEALS ASSISTANT** wanted. Action for Victims of Medical Accidents is a small national Charity. We need a Volunteer to act as Appeals Assistant to help with all our fundraising activities. The position would suit a Graduate seeking a way into the field of charity fundraising. Hours are flexible, travelling expenses plus honorarium paid. Further details contact Sarah Woodward Phone: 01-403-4744.

**AGE CONCERN NEWCASTLE** need volunteers to help us in Day Care, Lunch Clubs, Voluntary Visiting, plus the Carers Sitting Service and the Charity Shop. If you care about the elderly and live in Newcastle upon Tyne, please contact Ali Thompson, on 091 232 6488.

**CITIZEN ACTION** is in urgent need of volunteers for a variety of office support work with the Campaign for Lead-Free Air, in its Central London office. Daytime and evening help needed, on occasional or regular basis; we pay expenses. Phone Sarah Finch for details on 278 9686.

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!** The Association For All Speech Impaired Children (AFASIC) urgently needs regular help with simple clerical work such as stuffing envelopes. We also need someone who can enter basic information on a word-processor. Expenses within London paid, sandwich lunch provided, friendly atmosphere. Contact Helen: 01-236 3632/6487, AFASIC, 347 Central Markets, Smithfield, London, EC1 9NH.

**RATHBONE/SPRINGBOARD** Catering Scheme, Coalville, Leicestershire, requires Volunteers who are experienced caterers for 20-25 hours per week. Currently providing service to 30-40 customers and training 6 trainees with learning difficulties. The business will shortly expand. The possibility of permanent funding. Please ring (0530) 39531.

**WIMBLEDON C.A.B.** requires trainee advisers to give 2+ days weekly to this busy Bureau near B.R./L.T. Station. Basic literacy & numeracy skills are necessary. Previous experience with disadvantaged/oppressed groups is an asset. Training and expenses will be provided. For further details ring Di or Gill on 947-9344.

**FAMILY COURTS SERVICE** is urgently looking for volunteers to staff the Saturday Access Centre which is based at Balham and provides a safe and enjoyable place for parents and children, who live apart, to meet or spend time together. If you are interested please ring: 01-672-2682.

**CARDIFF SINGLE WOMEN'S** Housing Group urgently require a woman treasurer. We would welcome applications from experienced women who are interested in working with a small voluntary agency that runs a six bedded hostel for single homeless women. For further information, contact C.S.W.H.G., Senlan House, West Canal Wharf, Cardiff, CF1 5DB.

**OLDHAM.** Become a "Friend of Lake View" Residential Home for Physically Disabled Adults. Volunteers are needed to help improve the quality of life and independence of residents. Some training given. For further information contact: Miss G Hardman at Lake View, Kings Road, Oldham, OL8 2BJ, or telephone 061 624 6531.

help

*The HELP programme is a 5 minute local programme appearing at 6.25 on Thames TV, three times a week. Currently no transmision. Back in September!*

# It's summer and there's lots on in London

**But where can you afford to go if you are unemployed? 'Shoestring Summer' is a free new booklet which lists free events and concessions available for unemployed people in the Thames area this summer. It's free, it's provided by the HELP programme and you can get it from:**

**HELP (Shoestring Summer),**
**P.O. Box 11, London, NW1 3HZ**

*HELP • THAMES TV • EMBER HOUSE • 164/166 DRUMMOND STREET LONDON • NW1 3HR • TELEPHONE: 01 387 9494*

**CAMBRIDGE ALTERNATIVES** needs volunteers urgently to help with its summer programme providing activities and support for disadvantaged children during the summer holidays. Fun provided, expenses paid. If you can help and live near Cambridge please contact Melissa Horn or Danny Williams at Cambridge Alternatives, 74 Burleigh Street, Cambs. CB1 1DJ or ring (0223) 311211.

**FULL TIME VOLUNTEERS** are urgently needed for a Night Shelter/Resettlement Project in Stoke-On-Trent. You must be committed to the needs of single homeless people. Separate accommadation/meals on duty plus pocket money/allowance. £34 per week. Details from Gill Brown, Potteries Housing Association, 43 Sampson Street, Hanley, Stoke-On-Trent, ST1 5EY. Tel: 0782 279234.

**EDINBURGH CYRENIANS** reqire residential volunteers for our farm community and city community, which provide long-term care and support for young and homeless people who are experiencing personal and social difficulties. Our methods of social work, psychiatric and penal institutions. Volunteers will receive free board and lodgings, pocket-money, holiday money and termination grant. Minimum 6 months required. Contact Rosemarie at 20 Broughton Place, Edinburgh or 031-556-4971.

**PARENTS ANONYMOUS** is a voluntary telephone service for troubled people to get support in their time of need. If you are a parent and could spare some time weekly and feel you could listen, support, sympathise then please write for details of our next training to: 9 Manor Gardens, London, N7 6LA.

**WANTED** - Volunteers for young Single Homeless Project in Hatfield. Over 21? Clean driving licence? Good humoured? Tough too? Able to live on £37.25 a week for a year? Residential job with supportive and enthusiastic team, working with young people in Hostel, Day Centre and Community. Phone or write to Phil Rogers, Bridges Project, 9b St. Albans Road East, Hatfield, Herts, AL10 OES. Telephone: (07072) 66834.

**URGENT!** Volunteer required to work in hard-pressed but enthusiastic department in the British Section office. Work in the Urgent Actions department requires good humour, energy and the ability to work well under pressure. The hours are 2pm until 7pm and we offer travelling expenses and luncheon vouchers to the suitable candidate. For more information contact Clare or Ray at Amnesty International, phone 251 8371.

**SPORTS-MINDED,** active, disabled comedy writer (not confined to wheelchair) needs volunteer assistant. Driver essential. No personal care or domestic work. £35 a week plus accommodation 15 miles Cambridge. 2 months to one year commitment. Age 21 plus. Apply to Mrs Val Arnand (AF), D.I.A.L., Peterborough Centre for the Physically Handicapped, The Cresset, Bretton, Peterborough, PE3 6PJ.

**FULL-TIME VOLUNTEERS** are needed to work with single homeless men in 50-bed hostel sited in Bristol for a minimum period of 6 months. We will provide separate accommodation plus £37 p.w. Please contact: Mary Garvey at Redwood House, 1 Wade Street, Bristol, BS2 9DS. (0272 556358)

**F.L.A.T.** (Facility for Living and Assessment Together) requires Community Project Assistants. The F.L.A.T. Project trains and assesses peope who have learning dificulties (mental handicap) to live more independently in the community. Hours: 35 per week and 1/2 sleep in duties. In return: food and personal allowance of £146 per month, free accommodation and bills. Interested? Tel: 01-403-1542.

**THE ELCHANAN ELKES** Association for Intercommunity Understanding. Volunteers required in Israel 15 Oct to 15 Dec to work with the mentally handicapped. Short-term projects: 28 Nov to 18 Dec with aged; 1 to 28 Dec with mentally handicapped; 11 to 28 December; Botanical Gardens. Volunteers pay their own fare and insurance. Telephone 0533 415582 or 0533 775369.



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## General Appointments

**WEST MIDLANDS HEALTH SERVICE**

**MONITORING UNIT**

**UNIT DIRECTOR**

**Current Salary Range: SO1/2 £11,322 - £13,173**
**(pay award pending)**

The West Midlands Health Service Monitoring Unit is a research unit which investigates and reports upon matters of concern for the maintenance and development of public health care in the West Midlands. The Unit is supported by Birmingham, Coventry, Dudley and Sandwell District Councils and the West Midlands TUC Health Committee.

Due to the resignation of the current post-holder on obtaining a new appointment applications are invited for the post of Unit Director. You should have good research, administrative and organisational skills and the commitment to manage a small energetic team that offers good service delivery.

**Application form and further particulars can be obtained from the Unit's current Director, Andrew Johnson, West Midlands Health Service Monitoring Unit, 46 Northampton Street, Birmingham B18 6DX. Tel : 021-236-0483 (answer phone out of office hours).**

**Closing date: August 19th 1988.**

***The West Midlands Health Service Monitoring Unit is an equal opportunities employer.***

## Part-Time Administrator

CAPA is a voluntary organisation providing a 24-hour emergency service/support to people who are experiencing difficulties with the criminal justice system and sexual/racial harassment.

A part-time administrator is required for 21 hours per week for 6 months. The person appointed is expected to have typing, word-processing and book-keeping skills, salary and bill payments, establishing and maintaining office systems; minuting and generally servicing the management committee are also included in the duties.

NJL Scale Point 28 including London Weighting £12,040 pro rata.

Closing date: August 16th 1988.

**Please ring or write to the CAPA office for an application form and further details: CAPA (East London) Ltd, Oxford House, Derbyshire Street, London, E2 6HG. Telephone 01-729 2652/1264/1404/**

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## Family Centre Manager

Beatrix Family Centre, Handsworth, Birmingham

£11,322 - £13,173

The Family Centre offers a wide range of services to young children and their parents. As manager you will be responsible for the management, and administration of all the activities held at and arising from the centre. As a qualified social worker i.e. CQSW, CSS, Youth and Community with creative post qualifying experience you will be responsible for the development of the Centre and ensuring its *future within the community.*

**A multi-cultural community, a commitment to develop exemplary - value led - practice, local control, an ideal opportunity to effect change.**

**If you can identify with these statements then apply for this post.**

The Children's Society is a Christian childcare voluntary organisation and we are particularly keen to hear from black applicants.

For an informal discussion or a visit to the Beatrix family centre please contact: Rodney Reed, Assistant Regional Director - Tel: 021 551 4811.

We consider all applications for employment on the basis of suitability for the post irrespective of race, sex or disability.

For a job description/application form and a statement on the Society's christian basis, please apply in writing only to the Children's Society, Midlands Regional Office, 98 Church Hill Road, Handsworth, Birmingham, B20 3PD.

A voluntary society of the Church of England and the Church in Wales.

Please quote ref: 150/NS.

Closing date: 11th August 1988.

**The Children's Society**

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## Deputy Director of Social Services
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Derbyshire County Council is committed to an equal opportunities policy in terms of both staffing and of service availability and will expect similar commitment from applicants. Applications for this position will be particularly welcome from women, ethnic minorities or disabled people who are under-represented at this level in the Council's service.

An essential car user allowance, car loan facilities and relocation package will be available in appropriate cases. Application forms & further particulars are available from:

**County Personnel Division, Derbyshire County Council, County Offices, Matlock, Derbyshire, DE4 3AG, or by telephoning (0629) 580000 ext 6933.**

**Closing date - 19 August 1988.**

**The Council's policy is that all people receive equal treatment regardless of their sex, marital status, sexual orientation, race, creed, colour, ethnic or national origin, or disability.**

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**County Council**
Supports Nuclear Free Zones



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## COUNCIL FOR PROFESSIONS SUPPLEMENTARY TO MEDICINE

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The Council is to appoint for two years an EDUCATION OFFICER with a remit to assist the assessment of past and future developments in the pre-registration education and training of chiropidists.

This is intentionally a challenging post through which an appropriately qualified person can contribute to the development of professional education.

It is expected that applicants will probably be from outside the chiropody profession. The appointment is for a senior post for which relevant experience is essential, particularly in research/evaluation and the educational process. Applicants should therefore be graduates and relevant postgraduate qualifications would be an advantage. Examples of relevant backgrounds would be, amongst others, the social sciences, educational research and medical education.

A secondment from existing employment will be considered. Some travel is implicit but, while based in London, daily attendance there is not imperative.

*Salary Senior Lecturer (Burnham) £15,369 - £18,549*

Enquiries by post or telephone, and applications by post to:

**Mr F. Whitehill (Registrar)**
**Council for Professions Supplementary to Medicine**
**Park House**
**184 Kennington Park Road**
**London SE11 4BU**

**(Telephone 01-582 0866)**

*CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS – Friday 26 August 1988.*

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## Bedfordshire

A Nuclear Free Zone

**SOCIAL SERVICES**

# Staff Development Officer

**COUNTY HALL, Bedford**

**PO2 £13,449 - £14,625 pa (award pending)**

Retirement of the present postholder presents opportunity to join an expanding, well resourced, supportive and professional training team providing a wide range of quality training for Social Services and other Agencies in the county.

The post is one of five in the Child Care Training Unit, which is responsible for courses in Planning for Children and Child Protection, for Field, Residential, Family Centre and Day Nursery staff. Courses are provided direct by the Unit staff and also in association with the Social Work Education Centre at Bedford College and other training Agencies.

Applicants must be professionally qualified (CQSW or CSS), have proven and substantial experience in work with children and families, as well as a strong commitment to and some experience of staff development and training. Essential Car User Allowance.

**Informal Enquiries to Noreen Lewis (Tel: Bedford 63222, Ext: 2352) or Brian Steward (Ext: 2372).**

**Write for application forms and further details to Director, Social Services, County Hall, Bedford.**

**CLOSING DATE FOR RECEIPT OF APPLICATIONS: AUGUST 5, 1988.**

The Council is an Equal Opportunity employer and welcomes applications from members of ethnic minority groups, disabled persons and all other sections of the community.

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## RESEARCH ASSISTANT

To analyse abortion data. Ability to work with a PET computer and knowledge of BASIC an advantage. One year post at GRADE 1 Scale. Supervised by Wendy Savage. Applications to her at London Hospital (Mile End), Bancroft Road, London, E1.

*Closing date 23rd August.*

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3 W Solidarity Organisation seeks Northern field-worker. One year. £5,450.

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Latimer House is a 20 place day hospital for the assessment of elderly people with mental health problems. We are looking for an imaginative creative person who can work within a well established multi-disciplinary team. Responsibilities will include running groups, home visits, being an active team member and involved in a community based group.

Bloomsbury is known for its supervision structure and its appraisal system. It provides in-service training and encourages further training.

Informal contact: Kerry Childs, Head Occupational Therapist, South Wing, St Pancras Hospital. Tel: 387 4411 (01) Ext: 216.

**Applications forms from the Personnel Department, The National Temperance Hospital, Hampstead Road, London, NW1. Closing date: 12th August 1988. Tel: 387 9300 (01) Ext: 5530.**

*BLOOMSBURY HEALTH AUTHORITY - WORKING TOWARDS EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES*

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## LEICESTER RIGHTS CENTRE

# PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

The Centre is a second-tier law centre providing information, advice consultation and training to voluntary and statutory agencies in the city of Leicester. It also undertakes some case work and research in various fields of welfare law. The Project Co-Ordinator is responsible for the smooth and efficient running of the Centre, for the supervision of administrative staff, and for our external relations with funding bodies, the wider community etc.

Applicants should have relevant experience in law centres, advice centres or similar agencies, as well as appropriate financial and administrative experience. Familiarity with local government, advice work or community work in the voluntary sector would be an advantage. The postholder will be expected to have or to develop an expertise in one of the centre's specialist areas of advice.

The Centre aims to be an equal opportunities employer and is currently developing its policy. The successful applicant will be expected to help in formulating and implementing this policy. Salary £12804 - £13812 (PO1).

**For further details and applications forms contact: Leicester Rights Centre, 6 Bishop Street, Leicester, LE1 6AF (0533 553781).**

Closing date for applications August 31st 1988.

Interviews 14th September 1988.



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NEWHAM
HOUSING SERVICES
*homes for living in*

**DECENTRALISATION – APPOINTMENT OF:**

## DISTRICT HOUSING MANAGER

**Ref. H1001.**

**Grade Range: PO(12-15). Salary: Up to £19,176 per annum inc.**

## DISTRICT HOUSING MANAGER

**Ref. H1489**

**Grade Range: PO(9-12) Salary: Up to £17,943 per annum inc.**

Newham's Housing Service is developing new, responsive and caring solutions to the housing needs of a multi-racial Inner City community - among the most complex and challenging problems faced by any Local Authority in the country. We are committed to a radical devolution of power and responsibility for service delivery to the local level.

We have now almost completed our decentralisation programme, Area Committees have already been established; eleven offices are fully operational, with our final phase scheduled to be completed by January 1989.

We are, therefore, looking for District Housing Managers who will be responsible to an Area Co-ordinator for the successful delivery of housing services. Candidates will need to have an extremely high degree of commitment, considerable managerial skills to meet the challenge of this demanding position, in addition to sensibility to the aims of the Council and needs of the community.

Key issues to be addressed urgently include:

* Improving day-to-day housing services for both the public and private sectors with the help of local Tenants' Associations and Community Groups by ensuring the most effective utilisation of existing resources.
* Developing and implementing a planned maintenance programme for Council-owned stock.
* Effective implementation of housing management strategies designed to underpin the Authority's commitment to establishing multi-racial communities living in harmony.
* Establishing and monitoring local cost control accounting procedures for both Capital and Revenue Accounts.
* Working more closely with other council and non-Council agencies to improve services.

Women and people of Asian and Afro-Caribbean origin are under-represented at senior levels in the Housing Department: we will, therefore, particularly welcome applications from members of these groups.

***Closing Date: 12th August 1988.***

## PRINCIPAL PERSONNEL OFFICER

**Ref. H1146**

**Grade: PO (3-6) Salary: £14,241–£15,417 per annum inc.**

This post is based in the busy Personnel Section of the Housing Department and we are looking for a personnel generalist to cover the full spectrum of personnel services to a newly reorganised decentralised Housing Service. Duties will include:

** Supervision of the Personnel Section.*
** Development of a personnel strategy for the Department.*
** Advice and guidance to line management and staff on statutory and local conditions of employment and current procedures and policies.*
** Industrial relations liaison for matters pertaining to the Housing Department.*
** Monitoring of the Council's Equal Opportunities policy to ensure consistency of application in personnel matters.*

Applicants should have sound personnel experience in a supervisory capacity, gained either in local government or a similar large organisation. A detailed knowledge of statutory employment rights is essential. An understanding of Conditions of Service in local government and its decision-making processes is desirable as is an appreciation of equal opportunity implications for personnel practices and procedures.

People of Asian and Afro-Caribbean origin are particularly under-represented in the personnel function of the Housing Department. We will, therefore, particularly welcome applications from members of these groups.

***Closing Date: 5th August 1988.***

**Application forms, job specifications and further information for the above posts are available from the Personnel Section, Housing Department, 91 The Grove, Stratford, London, E15 1EP or telephone 01-519 4337 (24 hour Answerphone), quoting appropriate reference.**

Newham Council is committed to an equal opportunities policy. This means that the Council is committed to ensuring that no job applicant or employee will receive less favourable treatment on the grounds of race, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, disability, or is disadvantaged by condition of requirements which cannot be seen to be justifiable.
All jobs are open for job sharers, unless otherwise stated.

Newham
An Equal Opportunity Authority

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idaf

**INTERNATIONAL DEFENCE AND AID FUND FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA**

**have a vacancy for**

## *Distribution Officer in the Research Information & Publications Department*

Some knowledge of the current situation in Southern Africa and a commitment to the cause of liberation from Apartheid is essential.

Union-approved pay and conditions of service include 25 days' paid leave and a good pension scheme.

Salary at least £9,148 including a London Weighting Allowance of £1,767.

**Further details can be obtained by writing to: the Deputy Director, IDAF, 64 Essex Road, London, N1 8LR.**

Please note that applications, by letter with CV must be in by Monday 8th August 1988.

Please note that there are no application forms.

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**UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE**

**Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies**

## Research Associate

**Cultural Industries and Urban and Regional Development**

The Centre is seeking to appoint a researcher to support an evolving programme of work in the above field. The programme is concerned with furthering understanding of the place of cultural industries in economic and social change at the local level and developing appropriate policies for exploiting the current dynamics in this sector in relation to the regeneration of lagging areas.

The successful candidate is likely to have a first degree in Geography, Economics or Sociology and postgraduate research experience, preferably involving survey research. The appointment will be for one year from 1st October 1988 in the first instance. Salary will be on the Grade IA Scale £9,865 - £15,720 per annum according to qualifications and experience.

Further particulars can be obtained from **Mrs. N. Parker, Administrative Assistant, Centre for Urban and Regional Development Studies, University of Newcastle upon Tyne NE1 7RU** with whom applications (three copies) together with the names of three referees should be lodged not later than 31st August 1988.



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## UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

Department of Social Policy and Social Work

# LECTURER IN PSYCHOLOGY/SOCIAL WORK

Applications are invited for appointment to an established social work course in a department which offers both graduate and undergraduate courses leading to a degree and a professional quailification in social work.

The department seeks to appoint a full-time lecturer to teach various psychology courses to graduate and undergraduate social work students. The postholder will also be expected to work with a team of lecturers in the design, development and teaching of the total social work curriculum. Applicants should be graduates, have a social work qualification and some practice experience.

Appointment will be from January 1, 1989 on the Lecturer A Scale, starting salary in the range £9,260 to £12,150. Further particulars are available from the **Assistant Registrar (Commerce), University of Birmingham, P.O. Box 363, Birmingham, B15 2TT** to whom completed applications should be returned by August 31, 1988, quoting reference C/0859.

Informal enquiries welcomed by Lynne Muir on 021-414-5715.

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## SPECIAL HEALTH AUTHORITY

## MAUDSLEY HOSPITAL

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Have you got what it takes to join a friendly multi-disciplinary team?

Yes!

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Working from our Day Hospital, you would be providing continuous care to the Chronically Mentally Ill and their carers, both within the Day Hospital setting and through outreach work in the community of South Southwark.

If you are seeking a challenging and rewarding role with the chronically mentally ill then contact:

Charge Nurse Steve Gallagher on 01 703 6333 (Ext:2635) for informal visit or discussion.

For application form and job description write to:

**PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT**
**MAUDLSEY HOSPITAL**
**DENMARK HILL**
**LONDON SE5 8AZ**

## PITT STREET SETTLEMENT

# Locum Development Worker

required for one year from 1st October to assist with maintaining the Settlement's Education in the community work within the area of the North Peckham estates, with particular reference to Project Development, Fund Raising and Building Development.

Applications are invited from all sections of the Community. The post is open to Job Share for joint applicants.

Salary: £11,440 inclusive. Details and application forms from **Pitt Street Settlement, 191 East Surrey Grove, London, SE15 5PP tel: 01-703 4775.** Closing date 30th August 1988.

*Funding supported by the ILEA.*

## *London Borough of Camden*

SOCIAL SERVICES DEPARTMENT

Day/Residential Care Division

### Intermediate Treatment Officer

**(Temporary until 23/4/89)**
**£11,691 - £13,575 p.a. inc. (Sc6/SO1)**
**(Job share - 17.5 per week - expected to work some evenings/weekends)**

To be responsible to the Principal Intermediate Treatment Officer for jointly managing the Crescent projects building. Co-ordinate and develop Intermediate Treatment north of the Borough with other field offices specifically for Area 4.
You will be expected to support and supervise part-time staff. Experience of working with difficult adolescents and Intermediate Treatment groups/projects essential.
Ref: 10/115/NS.

Children Resource Group Section

### Assistant Intermediate Treatment Officer

**£10,488 - £11,373 p.a. pro rata (15 hours per week - West Hampstead area)**

To provide resource and group work for girls and young women who do not benefit from existing resources.
You must be able to work as part of a team and undertake mainly evening work.
Ref: 10/116/NS.

Learning Disabled Resource Group

### Assistant Organiser - Outreach Support Team

**£10,488 - £12,387 p.a. inc. (35 hours)**

We are a team of nine staff whose main focus is the personal development and support to this client group, working towards ordinary living.
We are looking for someone with flair and commitment to participate in the management, delivery and development of this service. A minimum of 2 years experience of work with this client group is essential.
Persons from Black/Ethnic minorities are under-represented in this service and we would therefore welcome applications from them.
Ref: 10/117/NS.
Closing date 15 August, 1988.

**Application form from and to be returned to Social Services Departmental Personnel Unit, Willing House, 356/364 Gray's Inn Road, London, WC1X 8BH. Telephone: 01-837 5621 (ansafone).**

*Camden Services*

**equal opportunity employer**

Applicants are considered on the basis of their suitability for the post, with equal opportunities for women, black/ethnic minorities, lesbians and gay men and people with disabilities, and regardless of marital status, age, creed/religion and unrelated criminal conviction. All posts are open for job-sharing.

# Classified Advertisements

# Telephone 01-739 1645



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# WELFARE OFFICER
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BBC

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We require a Welfare Officer to be responsible for advising management on all aspects of occupational welfare, providing counselling, advice and help for both serving and retired staff, administering the BBC's own registered charity, and editing a magazine for retired staff. It also includes managing a small group responsible for an accommodation bureau, health insurance schemes, a payroll charity scheme and retirement conferences.

You must have a recognised qualification in social work or personnel management, and have experience in a responsible position in the probation service, social services or personnel management. You should also be a confident public speaker and have a current knowledge of welfare benefits and the social services.

Salary range £16,243-£20,633 including London weighting. Benefits include five weeks' leave a year, a contributory pension scheme and travel loans. Relocation expenses considered. The Welfare Unit is at present based in the Oxford Circus area, but will be moving to the new Corporate headquarters at White City in mid-1990.

**For further details and an application form** contact (quote ref: 9794/NC and enclose s.a.e.) **BBC Corporate Recruitment Services, London W1A 1AA. Tel 01-927 5799.**

**Completed application forms should be returned by 17th August.**

# CLASSIFIED ADVERTISING
## Talk to Hazel, Chris or Carol Anne about it!
## 01-739-1645

**OV SELECTION**

have a number of vacancies for temporary & permanent office staff with typing skills. We welcome enquiries from mature people as well as College leavers.

**Phone Odette Veazey, OV Selection (Emp. Agy), Abford House, 15 Wilton Road, London SW1V 1LT. 01-828 8345.**

# Conferences

RIPA

Royal Institute of Public Administration

## GOVERNMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR
### Relationships, Roles and Responsibility
University of Kent, 16-17 September

Relationships between the public and private sectors are changing rapidly. Many of the changes taking place have fundamental implications for the nature, cost and quality of services to the public. Some of the changes and their implications have been fully thought through and well understood. Others have not. RIPA's 1988 national conference will provide a unique occasion for a major dialogue, involving public and private sectors, about recent developments, the present situation and future prospects.
Twenty-two sessions in five parallel groupings will focus on major issues of current concern. These will include:

Managing contracted-out services: a new role for chief executives
**Gerald Jones,** Chief Executive, London Borough of Wandsworth

Public/private partnership in urban economic development: the UK and US experience
**Victor Hausner,** PA Cambridge Economic Consultants

The impact of contracting out on public sector management
**Norman Flynn,** Lecturer, London Business School

Industry and Education: how they can help each other
**Elizabeth Crowther-Hunt,** Division Director, The Industrial Society

Management buy-outs from the public sector
**Joe McGrane,** Investors in Industry plc

Meeting economic need: conflicting demands for the private and public sector in local economic development
**Anna Whyatt,** Chief Executive, London Borough of Southwark

The role of the urban development corporation in local economic development
**Reg Ward,** Formerly Chief Executive, London Docklands Development Corporation

Lifting the burden: shaping central and local government policies to business needs
**Graham Mather,** General Director, Institute of Economic Affairs

Business in the Community: the motivation of business for local regeneration
**Robert Davies,** Deputy Chief Executive, Business in the Community

Full details and booking form from Conference Office, Royal Institute of Public Administration, 3 Birdcage Walk, London SW1H 9JH. Tel: 01-222 2248



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# Courses/Training

**INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION**
**UNIVERSITY OF LONDON**

## MSc in Politics of Rights

Applications are invited for a new course leading to the MSc in Politics of Rights. The core course for the degree covers politics of human rights as implemented in national and international law; theories and concepts of rights, race and gender; the control of arbitrary power. Optional components include women's studies, righs to education, competing rights, women and development, and other politics options taught at Birkbeck College. **The structure of the course enables students to concentrate their work in Women's Studies if they wish to.**

The length of the course is two calendar years part-time, one calendar year full-time.

Further details are available from:

**Margherita Rendel, Course Tutor, Human Rights and Education, Institute of Education University of London, 58 Gordon Square, London, WC1H ONT.**

**N U P R D**
**ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

**The Organisation of Community Based Care for People with Mental Illness**

University of York

26-27 September 1988

**Ring 01-690-1184 for programme and application form**

**TAVISTOCK INSTITUTE OF MARITAL STUDIES**

**Marital, Family and Client-Worker Interaction**

Practice-based weekly seminars for the helping professions.

October 1988-May 1989.

**Application forms from Benita Dyal, Tavistock Institute of Marital Studies, Tavistock Centre, 120 Belsize Lane, London, NW3 5BA. Telephone No: 01-435 7111.**

*Closing date: 19th September, 1988.*

***Race and Society Supplement***

*August 5th 1988*

The most cost-effective medium for equal opportunities recruitment and courses advertising is New Statesman & Society - Britains fastest growing weekly title*

**For further details contact**
**Hazel, Chris or Carol Anne on 01-739-1645**

**Copy deadline: Tuesday 2nd August 1988**

**Source: I.M.S. Medialog June 1988.*

# Personal

**Correspondence Course in Creative Writing**

We cannot supply you with an imagination but our personalised tutoring system can develop the skills which liberate it. Details, sample exercise, S.A.E. to:

**Colne Creative Writing, Colnehaven, Philip Road, Wivenhoe, Essex, CO7 9DN.**

*Rates for unwaged.*

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**35, Ermines, B-5840 Rhisne**
**BELGIUM**

# Billboard — Theatre

**NATIONAL THEATRE** 01-928 2252 Olivier (open stage) THE SMALL FAMILY BUSINESS, THE SHAUGHRAUN by Dion Boucicault, 'TIS PITY SHE'S A WHORE (Last Perf). Lyttelton (proscenium stage) CAT ON A HOT TIN ROOF, THE CHANGELING. Cottesloe (small stage) CYMBELINE, THE WINTER'S TALE, THE TEMPEST. See daily press for dates and times or ring recorded information 01-928 2256

# Meetings

**THEOSOPHY** Wisdom Religion Informal meetings Sundays 8pm on Reincarnation, Karma, Death, Clairvoyance, Spiritualism, Cyclic law, SAS for programme, information: ULT, 62 Queens Gardens, London, W2 3AH.

# Booksellers

**SCARCE BOOK** Service: Social-Economic History; World Politics. State wants. 01-876-7254. Hammersmith Books, Barnes High Street, SW13 9LR.

**REVIEW COPIES** and other books in fine condition bought and sold by Vermilion Books, 57 Red Lion Street, London, WC1 Telephone: 01-242-5822.

# Holidays/Travel

**TEACHERS' HOSPITALITY NETWORK** Directory lists hosts (all teachers) offering friendly and good value weekend and holiday accomodation nationwide. S.A.E. details: THN (N), 30a Kingsgate Road, London, NW6 4TB.

**GORBACHEV'S RUSSIA.** Special women's visit. Discussions with Soviet women, official sightseeing, help getting beyond the tourist map. 8 nights December, Leningrad-Moscow, £479. PO Box 171, Liverpool, L69 8DB.

**DISCOUNTED FLIGHTS** Italy, France, Scandinavia, Spain, Portugal, Germany, Austria. Yugo. Charter/Schedule. AIRFORCE. 01-506-2233. ATOL 1817.

**JOURNEY LATIN** America. Low cost flights, holiday journeys, 3-6 weeks, JLA, 16 Devonshire Road, London, W4 2HD. 01-747-3108.

**TRIED THE REST**, now try the best. For low air fares to world-wide destinations inc Africa. SHL, 313a Hoe St, London, E17. 01-520-7911.

# Heartsearch

**DRAWING DOWN THE MOON** Introduction Agency... "could match up an Anais Nin or a Spike Milligan without much difficulty". *(The Times Literary Supplement).* 01 938 2151.

OLD FRIENDS

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MARRIAGE, FRIENDSHIP or COMPANIONSHIP:
the introduction agency for the 40s, 50s, & 60s

**Details from: Anne Brent, 18a Highbury New Park, N5 2DB Telephone: 01-226 5432**

**DATELINE'S PSYCHOLOGICALLY** accurate introductions lead to pleasant friendships, spontaneous affairs and firm, lasting relationships including marriage. All ages, all areas. Free details from: Dateline Computer Dating, Dept. (7NS), 23 Abingdon Rd, London, W8. Phone: 01-938-1011.

**ENRICH YOUR** Social Life! Designed for the discerning and sophisticated, Savoir Vivre provides more interesting introductions. Send SAE to: Savoir Vivre, Ref: NS L, Tynron, Thornhill, DG3 4LG or tel 084 82 611 anytime.

**THINK!** Wouldn't you prefer to join a photographic introduction agency that cares about your individual requirements and offers a friendly and confidential service? Wouldn't you prefer to join the Singles Register? 458 8344.

**BUBBLING IDEAS/ENERGY.** Attractive female, fluent German, preferred base Medoc/Gironde, seeks affectionate and enterprising European (36-46). View companionship/joint venture. Initially. Tel: France 56419994.

**WHO CAN REASSURE** this lively attracive male journalist (young 40) that unattached intelligent slim London women are not extinct? Tel/photo please. Write Box (30) 056.

**SOCIOLOGIST, DIVORCED, 50's,** in despair seeks genuine attractive caring woman, preferably Midlands or North. No materialism but warmth and affection. Write box (30) 057.

**RETIRED MAN,** Dorset, intelligent, uncultured; into indoor games, outdoor sport, countryside, seeks compatible female friend(s). Age immaterial. All replies answered. Write Box (30) 058.

**SEMI-RETIRED GENTLEMAN,** N.T., C.G.A., member, pipe smoker would very much like to meet a compatible, tallish, stylish lady, 55-65. Southern Counties. Write Box (30) 059.

**LIFE IS A SPIRITUAL** - emotional quest; agree? This socialist man thinks so, and seeks woman who likewise loves serious/unserious music, mountains, good reading, desire and justice. Please write Box (30) 060.


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# THE DIGGER

*Stuart Weir prepares for war around his newly sewn vegetable patch*

I am always moved by the signs of precarious human cultivation in remote and wild countryside, and my tidy pocket of ordered soil in the wilderness of our back garden inspires something of the same emotion, mingled with a spot of pride. I have now cleared and weeded a vegetable patch, about eight yards' square, and sewn a packet of carrot seeds. Everywhere else nature, green in tooth and claw, rages abundant.

There is a pathetic fallacy about plant life. It's somehow regarded as the peaceful side of nature's character. That's not my experience. My back garden is desperately competitive in a way which would warm Mrs Thatcher's heart. My honeysuckle is especially ruthless, smothering shrubs and seizing flowers yards away with its creepers. Only last year I planted an innocent-looking plant with soft purple blooms at the end of a flower bed. It turned into a monster quite as tall as me and engulfed the whole bed; I had to hack through the stems with a spade to free a precious Peruvian tree I planted years ago which obstinately refuses to grow above nine inches tall. But I also uncovered a second redcurrent bush, brimming over with bright red berries. I am not quite sure if the first bush has spawned this one, or if I originally planted two and simply forgot. Who cares? The fruit is delicious.

Like the hunchback hero of *Jean de Florette*, I garden by the book. I bought a guide, entitled something like *Be Your Own Vegetable Expert*, but it's lost somewhere in the sargasso sea of toys and children's books in the front room. Looking for it, however, I chanced upon Topsy and Tim's adventures in the garden. Topsy and Tim are the kind of kids you'd like to drown, but I have to admit that the book is a jolly good guide to planting carrot seeds.

Its drawback is that Topsy and Tim's garden is as cloyingly lovesome as they are. The soil is perfect and doesn't suck seeds down into potential oblivion as the heaving, sodden mass I consign them to seems likely to do. Nor do voracious snails lie in wait for their seedlings; nor worse still do species of vicious insect (about which my *Vegetable Expert* warned me) hang around waiting for the tiny tots to bungle the "pinching out"—thinning out the seedlings—so that they can come in and ruin the entire crop. Is it right, I wonder, to protect children from the harsh realities of life in the garden?

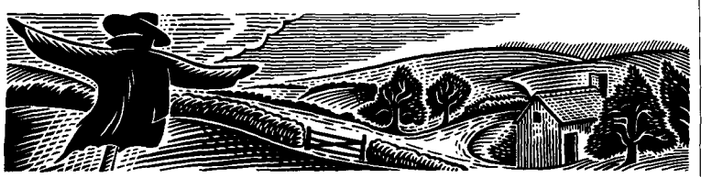
Heaven knows what I can do to keep off these mysterious insects. According to the book, they need only the scent of a single bruised carrot seedling to home in like a homopterous exocet for the kill. But at least I can prepare against the snails. Some on the libertarian left use pellets which dry the poor creatures up. (I'm naming no names.) For the time being I am going to build what is apparently (for snails) an impenetrable wall of crushed egg shells round the vegetable patch. It should be in place by the time the carrots stir themselves. That is, if we can all stomach eating so many bloody eggs.

My ambition, as some of you may recall, is to grow really sweet and wholesome carrots for the winter. Francis Wheen recently tried to give me some encouragement with a mouth-watering description of some sweet carrots he'd just eaten. My worry is that his carrots were short and stubby, mine (if they ever emerge) will be long and even.

Now I could have bought seeds of the stubby variety, but the instructions on all the packets insisted on sowing early. The only packets which declared themselves suitable for sowing in July pictured perfect-looking specimens which looked as though they belonged on a neon-lit supermarket shelf and tasted like balsa wood. Even as I was buying them I wondered if I shouldn't have disobeyed the instructions on the packets and gone for the more sympathetic looking ones. Have I bottled out?

# FRINGE BENEFITS

*Colin Ward on changing attitudes to the village school*



In Charsfield, Suffolk, and the villages around, plenty of people stayed up recently until the absurd hour of 12.55am, just to see Channel 4's revival of Peter Hall's film adaptation of Ronald Blythe's *Akenfield*.

It makes riveting watching to glimpse people you actually know, acting out the roles of their grand parents, especially as for some of them the film itself is now a period piece. For the primary school children in the film are now in their twenties, and were watching out indulgently for a nice photogenic accident that occurred in its making.

Teacher, realistically playing the part of her severe predecessor, admonished one infant so sternly that he, never having been addressed like this in his life, crumpled into uncontrollable sobbing. Of course, once the scene was shot, everyone rushed forward to console him and to stress that it was only a game.

It was a reminder that the village school, whose survival is a matter of vital concern up and down the country today, was once a hard, tough and limiting environment. There has been a striking change in our response to the actual words "village school".

Ronald Blythe himself expressed this very accurately when he wrote in 1980, "For some time after the last war these schools lacked any kind of charm and were even found hateful, as being remnants of an all too easily remembered poverty, both physical and intellectual, and sometimes of brutality. Those who attended them breathed a sigh of relief when they were closed down and their children bussed to new sunny primaries miles away. However, as with all things, the day of re-evaluation has dawned..."

It has indeed. You have only to open a local paper in the shires to read reports of "Save Our School" campaigns by rural parents. The school at Charsfield itself (Blythe's Akenfield), along with that at Little Bealings, has been threatened by closure by the county council, followed by protests, meetings and a delegation to the Secretary of State. It was reprieved last month.

In Burston, Norfolk, with immense irony, the seventieth anniversary of the Burston Strike School, set up by parents in an epic village struggle against the sacking of teachers by the local plutocracy of sporting parson and farming landowners, was celebrated by a demonstration in support of Burston County Primary School, threatened with closure by the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the pupils who walked out of it in 1914 and attended the Strike School from 1918 to 1939.

Village schools have changed immeasurably since those days, but the change in parents' and educators' perceptions of appropriate school size are much more recent. In the sixties the Plowden report made recommendations on school size, which Lady Plowden herself has abandoned. Her old criteria are still used as a basis for closure by county councils, usually supported by the Secretary of State, in spite of his electioneering promise to rural voters.

Parents nowadays expect teachers to be local, friendly and approachable, not an annual meeting many miles away, but in an informal day-to-day relationship. Assumptions about class and culture made this impossible in the past, when Teacher was regarded with fear.

The changed relationship between parent and school (something Mr Baker is alleged to be keen about) is precisely why they are hurt and bewildered at the thought that their hopes for their five-to-eleven year-olds cannot be met in their own village.



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# ENDGAMES

## WEEKEND COMPETITION

**No. 3036 Set by E O Parrott**

Time for another Chaucer comp: Chaucerian descriptions of a social worker, a sociologist, a union leader, a Yuppy, a hack or any other modern pilgrim. Entries in by 10 August. Max 160 words.

**No 3033 Set by E O Parrott**

A secret report is said to have revealed recently that the water supply of this country is dangerously polluted with aluminium. Provide extracts from other secret reports revealing alternative plausible horrors. Or provide subsequent government press realeases which seek to calm the population and put on a brave face.

**Report by Sorley Mist**

Haste ye back to the days when they sneerin' sassenachs frae *Punch* could pucker a smile frae the bowels o' hell. Last week's joke on oor comp wis as dreich as We Free funeral on a West Highland Sunday. Ah weel, a wee bitty tenner fer yez all and a massive thrity quid for wee Georgie Moor who hae shone sae breicht and bonnie by sendin' in sae mony guid entries. A niver seen the like.

The surges in power due to unforeseen factors during the modernisation of the electric industry before privatisation should not alarm customers provided that they remain properly earthed. Goloshes or wellingtons should be worn at all times, and rubber gloves are advisable when turning on switches. The effect in most cases is no more than a strong static.

**George Moor**

Following recent allegations in the popular press concerning the North Neasden by-election result, the Government wishes to categorically deny any involvement with the manufacturers of the so-called "Persuader-Gun". Although it has been proved that such a product exists and that a small amount of this substance in contact with the tongue can trigger hallucinatory images, this is by no means the same as implanting a programmed image to control behaviour. Therefore the ludicrous assertion that whole batches of specially treated stamps were issued to Neasden post offices two weeks before the by-election is totally without foundation.

The Opposition must address the failings of its own candidate in coming fifth behind the Monster Raving Loony party. In any case, it has been estimated that if all those who licked a stamp in North Neasden during the period in question were somehow driven to vote Conservative, then the swing to the Government would have been far higher than 52 per cent. Such excellent results are a long overdue recognition for the success of government policies by the voters of this country.

**David Oliver**

To put an end to rumours, printers for the post office have issued this reassurance to customers. The arsenic in the adhesive of 1988 stamps is present in such minute amounts that one would need to lick several dozen for a fatal dose.

Nevertheless, for the time being, it would be prudent always—when possible—to use a moisture-pad instead of the tongue and to wash the hands thoroughly after any dealings with stamps. Under no circumstances should babies and smaller household pets be permitted to suck or chew postage stamps, especially those of the higher denominations.

**George Moor**

Contrary to recent reports in the media, there is no evidence to suggest that the drinking of bottled mineral water causes deformation of the voice box.

In the cases cited where the tone and accent were altered, this change was undoubtedly due to socio-economic causes. Nor should any significance be attached to the proliferation of "Hooray Henries" in the Perrier Water belt. In extensive tests using rats not one developed an upper class accent, and the few that did respond to the mineral water diet by mewing were found to be suffering from a psychological condition unique to rodents.

Moreover, tests on a Welsh miner who developed a Chelsea accent after continually drinking Evian proved conclusively that his condition had been exacerbated by the inhalation of coal dust and other noxious substances, and an infatuation with Sue Lawley.

**Katie Mallett**

The Home-Grown Cereals Authority wishes to reassure the public that recent reports of "Oil-Seed Rape Blindness", supposedly caused by glare from large stretches of this bright yellow crop, are almost certainly wildly exaggerated.

In particular, the stories circulating in some newspapers of how Mrs Annie Buckett became delirious in the middle of a field of oil-seed rape, and only recovered after her daughter threw a blanket over her, are probably erroneous. It is more likely that Mrs Buckett was only suffering the effects of the chemical sprays.

There is no need for alarm. And there is absolutely no need for people venturing into the countryside to wear skiing goggles.

**Simon Herbertson**

The accelerating north-south tilt of the British mainland should not occasion alarm. Residents of Kent have been advised to visit relatives further north. In other parts of the country castors should be removed and furniture stabilised. It is recommended, in order to prevent sliding out, that the lower sides of the beds should have foot-boards or the level be raised by propping up with telephone directories or bricks.

**George Moor**

Rumours of a new sunlight tax have been scotched by government sources. A community solar tax is as yet only an idea for combating harmful solar rays which attack the skin via windowpanes. The Prime Minister is said to be in favour of this caring way of preventing unnecessary burdening of the NHS. She believes such a scheme would give people more choice between having or not having windows.

Should such a tax be formulated, it would, with scrupulous fairness, be administered as a single flat rate across the board, on each house, flat, caravan, shed, etc. containing sheets of glass. Perspex or plastic alternatives would not be exempt from such a tax.

An opposition spokesperson said that if a sunlight tax were to be reintroduced families existing in bed and breakfast hotels would get their windows boarded up "straight off".

Garden cloches under a size to be determined would, however, be exempt.

**Gina Williams**

Re: "Beefburger Protein Content", the Minister finds that the term "10 per cent other meats" needs not be further categorised to identify what proportion of earthworms may have been included up to now under this heading. The Consumers' Association is assured by the suppliers that no worms obtained from British graveyards are processed in this way.

**Bill Turner**

## IF THE CAP FITS

*No 78*

Truly: if the cap fits . . . Michael Dukakis and Jesse Jackson agree to forget past rivalries, says *The Times*. Oh Yes? Let us know what they're *really* saying or thinking? Entries by 5 August. £10 for the best entry.

*No 76: Winner*

Runcie: "Nowhere, I admit, does Our Lord *specifically* forbid massage parlours . . ." *(Chris Baldick, Walton, Liverpool)*



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# CHESS

Game for game, the match between club teams must still remain the most common form of play. Yet in Britain it has such a lowly status that talk of a *club player* makes one think of some simple soul who looks up in awe to the high-fliers of the tournament scene. It's mainly a matter of money. Club chess is cheap and cheerful, or otherwise just cheap and grotty. The most common constituent of team spirit—the emotion that keeps people turning out through venues fair to foul—must be pity for the poor sucker who got landed with the chore of captaincy.

Of course, it would be possible to raise a much stronger side, if you could pay people to play for you. There are places, particularly in West Germany and Holland, where clubs are supported by sponsorship deals that enable them to do just that, building star-studded teams by hiring GMs and IMs. Whether this is a Good Thing is moot. It can help to make a professional chess career less precarious than it would otherwise be, and there are quite a few English mercenaries who would like to be able to count on these arrangements continuing. But in West Germany in particular I think that the clubs in the *Bundesliga* have enfeebled German chess in much the same way that the counties have weakened English cricket. It is bound to inhibit the development of home-grown talent, if all the leading roles are reserved for imported stars. Surely there is some connection between the *Bundesliga* system and the fact that, since the emergence of Hubner, West Germany has failed to produce any new GMs of comparable stature.

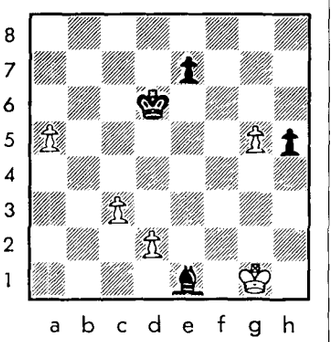
Some of the wealthier clubs can afford to field teams that are stronger than national sides. For the finals of the European club championships, held earlier this month, the **Volmac Rotterdam** side was an enhanced version of the Dutch team: 1. Timman, 2. Korchnoi, 3. van der Wiel, 4. Speelman, 5. Sosonko, etc. At least they could claim that boards 1,3 and 5 were more or less locals. The *Bundesliga* representatives were **Solingen**, whose team list started: 1. Hubner, 2. Short, 3. Spassky, 4. Lobron, 5. Lau.

Astonishingly, neither of these mighty teams won the European Cup. The opposition from Eastern Europe came from the armed forces—from the **Central Army Chess Club** of the USSR and from **Honved Budapest** (which is the Hungarian army team). *NATO is a long, long* way from parity in this domain. The Red Army side, with GM Tukmakov down on board six, won quite comfortably. Perhaps, to do them justice, some of the big names in the Rotterdam and Solingen teams may have been suffering from the "Belfort blues"—creative exhaustion after the pressures of the tough *grand prix* tournament.

Rotterdam's fourth board, who is currently rated number five in the world, phoned this game score through to me.

**Khalifman-Lau, European Club Finals 1988. Grunfeld Defence.**
**1. d4 Nf6 2. c4 g6 3. Nc3 d5 4. Nf3 Bg7 5. cxd5 Nxd5 6. e4 Nxc3 7. bxc3 c5 8. Rb1 0-0 9. Be2 b6** 9...cxd4 10. cxd4 Qa5+ leads to an ending which is OK for Black if White allows the exchange of Queens: 11. Qd2 Qxd2+ 12. Bxd2 e6 13. 0-0 b6. But 11. Bd2 Qxa2 looks rather a hot pawn. Letting a pawn go on c3 or a2, in the interests of initiative, is the main motif of the 8. Rb1 line. **10. 0-0 Bb7 11. Qd3 Ba6 12. Qe3 Qc8** Black's last two moves are sufficiently provocative to prompt the Soviet player to make a promising pawn-sacrifice. I would suggest that the moral is that if Black is to play...b6 and ...Bb7, he needs to check the central advance by inserting...e6. 13. d5! Bxe2 14. Qxe2 Bxc3 15. e5 The trap snaps shut behind the Bishop. **Qf5 16. Rb3 Ba5 17. Nh4 Qd7 18. Bh6 Qxd5** If the Rook moves 19. e6 wins in short order. E.g., 18...Rd8 19. e6 Qxd5 20. exf7+ Qxf7 21. Rf3 and Black cannot defend both e6 and e7. **19. Bxf8 Kxf8 20. Rd3 Qb7 21. Rd8+ Kg7 22. Nf5+!** A devastating blow, which was not so easy to see, given that White's next is a quiet move. **gxf5 23. Qe3 Qc6 24. Qg5+ Qg6 25. Qxe7 1-0.** Khalifman, who is 21, shows a tremendous vigour and authority in his games. Expect to hear more of him in the future.

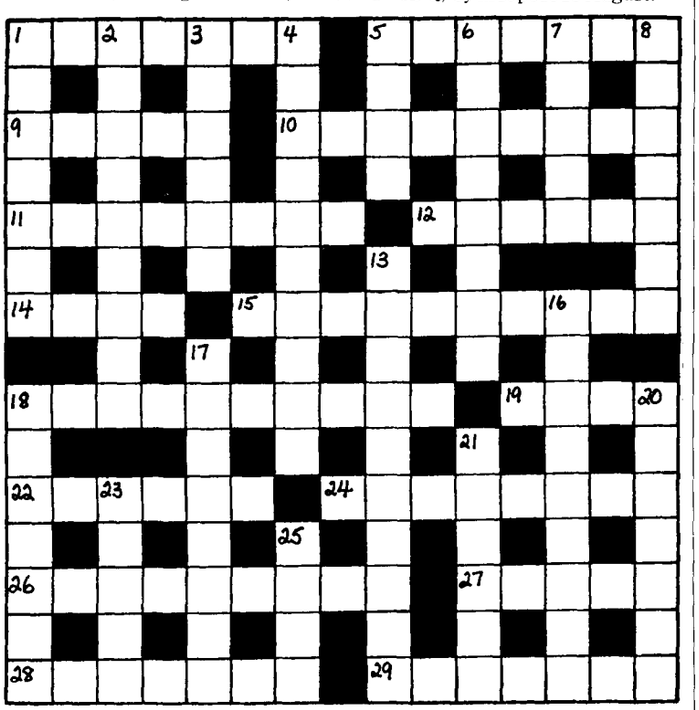
**Problem**
White to play and draw. This 1951 composition by A. Ivanov is one of 520-odd instructive endgame positions included in the newly published *Test Your Endgame Ability* by August Livshits and Jon Speelman (Batsford, £8.95).




*George Botterill*

# WEEKEND CROSSWORD

PRIZES: £5 Book Tokens for the first three correct solutions opened. Entries to Crossword 1603, New Statesman & Society, Foundation House, Perseverance Works, 38 Kingsland Road, London E2 8DQ, by first post 15 August.



**Name** _____

**Address** _____

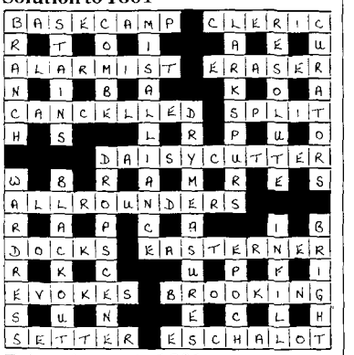
_____

**Crossword 1603**
ACROSS
1. The VIP goes on after these hats (7)
5. Pleased when came first after a good mark (7)
9. She has to exist on nothing (5)
10. I come in to choose wives for aristocrats (9)
11. Praise from an archbishop among the graves (8)
12. Stick in a road he resided in long ago (6)
14. Whereabouts in Italy is this river? (4)
15. Lack of vigour of a state without women? (10)
18. Something in the garden which makes a novelist right in expectation (10)
19. Place to notice (4)
22. Publisher holds to backing an author (6)
24. Story one acted in make-up (8)
26. Easily shocked when West goes backwards into the marmalade (9)
27. It sounds like a failure for northerners (5)
28. Moves awkwardly like soccer player before season starts (7)
29. Means of celebrating countries without an upper class (7)

DOWN
1. What they did to the colours, having pot no red (7)
2. It is early whether Eva is there or not (9)
3. Corrects me in Finals (6)
4. Tale of an item of clothing put on a politician (5,5)
5. Drinks for the young (4)
6. Performer who keeps the company running through the centre (8)
7. Articles consigned to oblivion (5)
8. Notice that cinders are scattered about (7)
13. Plant which appears in unusual haunts after an interval (10)
16. Music which makes the spirit play about with half of the melody (9)
17. Where everyone is on the sunny side (8)
18. It can be used cuttingly as the drudge observed (7)
20. Hair in this mattress escapes easily (7)
21. Plant where golfer turns up without his clubs (6)
23. Money for a poet (5)
25. Long for a girl (4)

SETSQUARE

**Solution to 1601**


BASKECAMP CLERIC
R T O I A E U
ALARMIST ERASER
N I B A K O A
CANCELLED SPLIT
H S L R P U O
DAISYCUTTER
W B R A M R E S
ALLROUNDERS
R A P C A I B
DOCKS KASTERNER
R K C U P E I
EVOKES BROOKING
S U N E C L H
SETTER ESCHALOT

**Prizewinners to 1601**
W. A. Carruthers, Chester.
Louise Mestel, Lewes, E. Sussex.
J. R. Stagles, Wokingham, Berks.



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# BACKCHAT

*People who appear on TV and radio get paid a lot of money, don't they? Don't you believe it, says Brian Hilliard.*

The paymaster of Radio Four is possibly the most conscientious accountant in the media world. Within a week, sometimes within two days, of doing an interview on any R4 programme you receive a letter inviting you to come to the BBC and pick up £23 in cash, or fill in a form to be paid by cheque. £23 for a three minute interview may not sound a lot but there is the added pleasure of being conveyed to and from the studio by taxi. BBC Radio London pays £20 per interview, usually after a gentle reminder, and provides a taxi to the studio if you ask for it. London's commercial station, LBC, are very mean and try not to pay you at all, but more of them later.

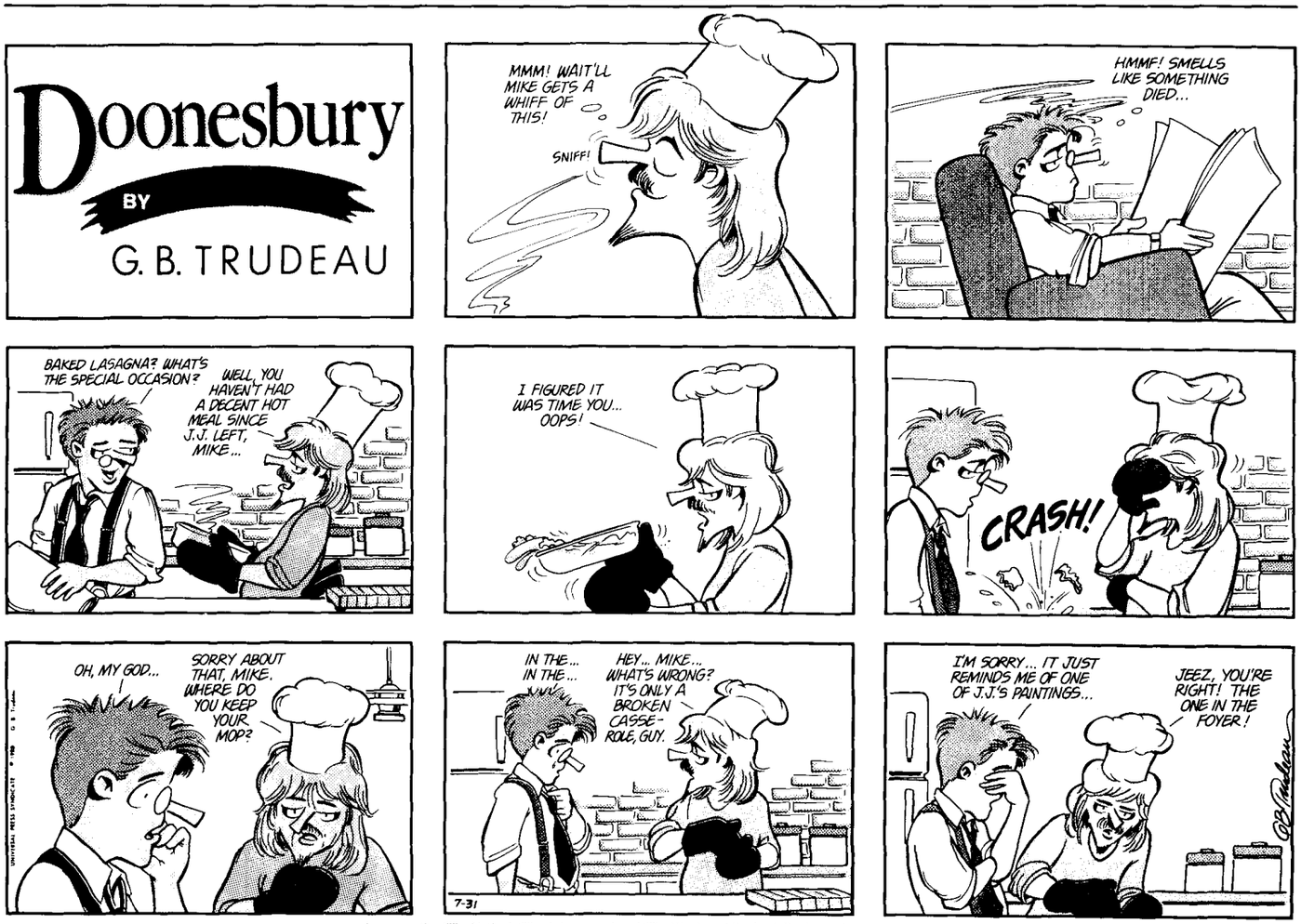
Television, in spite of the fat salaries, and the bigger audiences, pays little more than radio. Neither of the breakfast programmes go above £25, unless you're asked to "read" the papers on BBC *Breakfast Time*. For those of you unaware of this particular ritual, "reading the papers" is a two or three minute slot in which a celebrity or a specialist comments on the dailies' treatment of one particular subject. It's a ritual that most journalists perform every day, and in which you probably take part every Sunday morning. The BBC, I'm pleased to say, think it's worth £75.

ITN and BBC documentaries pay about £40 for interviews or comment, and if you travel to take part in the programme, they'll both pay first class fares and hotel bills for the night.

And what are they paying for? Instant and, hopefully, informed comment. I imagine I must be in 20 to 30 producers' indexes under "police", but the internal procedures are probably the same whatever the subject. A hospital ceiling falls in during a heart transplant. Get someone from the hospital to comment. If no one will talk, look in the hospital index and see who the experts are on ceilings, operating theatres, and heart transplants. Ring them, see what they have to say, what time they are free; back to the producer who makes the choice of who is to be interviewed. I find it impossible now to watch a news or current affairs programme without guessing who is being paid, and who is doing it for free.

There's an assumption in television news, that contributors do not have to be paid for "off the wall" comments. You may have spent half an hour on the phone, you may even have provided exclusive information, but if it's news, there's no fee. I imagine the basic code runs "Don't pay if the interview is in the street, don't offer if it's in the contributor's office, give in gracefully if the contributor comes to the studio and is brash enough to ask about money." Which brings me back to LBC.

I once gave five interviews in about as many months for one LBC programme without the slightest sign of payment being made. After the fifth, I buttonholed a producer. That's a feat in itself. Nobody at LBC has the time to stop and talk, and regular contributors are left to find their own way out of the building. "Look here, producer," I said, "You've had five interviews out of me, each of which you've described as 'smashing', 'great stuff' or 'just what we wanted' and I haven't been paid for any of them. Now I want a favour. I've a book coming out next week, and I'd be glad of an interview to plug it." I got the interview, and they paid me £40. There's a moral there somewhere.


Doonesbury
BY
G. B. TRUDEAU
MMM! WAIT'LL MIKE GETS A WHIFF OF THIS!
SNIFF!
HMMF! SMELLS LIKE SOMETHING DIED...
BAKED LASAGNA? WHAT'S THE SPECIAL OCCASION?
WELL, YOU HAVEN'T HAD A DECENT HOT MEAL SINCE J.J. LEFT, MIKE...
I FIGURED IT WAS TIME YOU... OOPS!
CRASH!
OH, MY GOD...
SORRY ABOUT THAT, MIKE. WHERE DO YOU KEEP YOUR MOP?
IN THE... IN THE...
HEY... MIKE... WHAT'S WRONG? IT'S ONLY A BROKEN CASSE-ROLE, GUY.
I'M SORRY... IT JUST REMINDS ME OF ONE OF J.J.'S PAINTINGS...
JEEZ, YOU'RE RIGHT! THE ONE IN THE FOYER!
7-31

Incorporating 'The Nation', 'The Athenaeum' and 'The Week-end Review'. Registered as a newspaper.
Typesetting by ECM, 36-42 Clerkenwell Road, London EC1. Colour origination by Graphic Ideas, 135-139 Curtain Road, London EC2.
Printed by BPCC Colchester Web Offset Ltd, Sheepen Place, Colchester CO3 3LJ (Tel: 577881), a member company of Maxwell Communications Corporation plc.
Distribution by NS Distribution 102 Curtain Road London EC2A 3AA 01-739-4807 Second class postage paid at New York, NY USPS 382260. Air freight in US by Speedimpex USA Inc.

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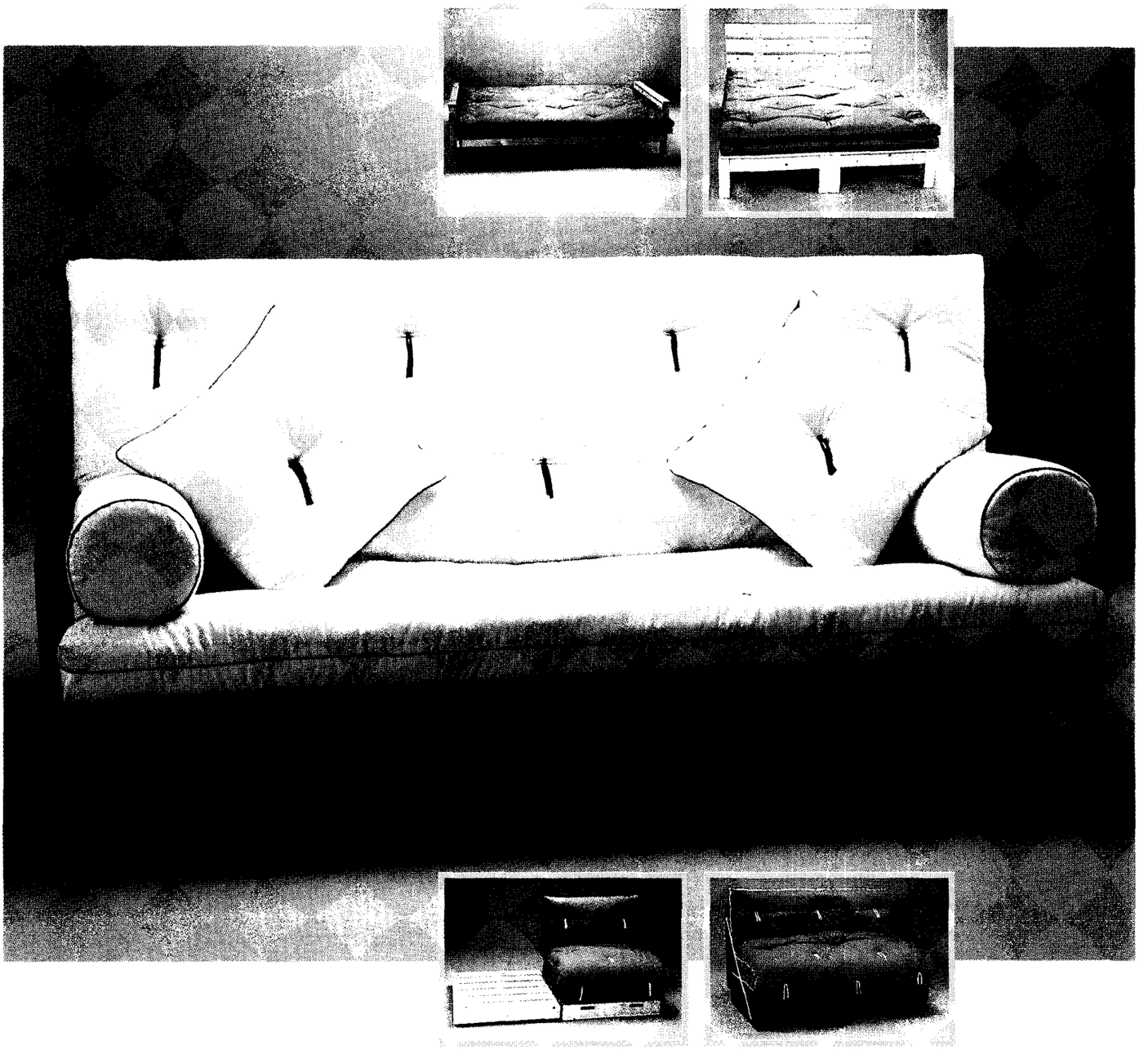

**Mark Two**
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